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THE REV.D GEORGE WALKER, F.R.S.

& late President of the Philosophical and Literary Society of Manchester.

Published April 19.th 1809, by J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church Yard London.

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ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

BY

GEORGE WALKER, F.R.S.

LATE PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AT THE NEW COLLEGE, & PRESIDENT OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL & LITERARY SOCIETY, MANCHESTER.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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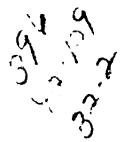

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Memoir of the Rev. GEORGE WALKER is chiefly addressed to his surviving friends and acquaintance: to the general reader, therefore, some apology may be due for a minuteness of detail, which the few incidents in the life of a retired literary character would on any other account have rendered unnecessary.

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MEMOIR

OF

THE REV. GEORGE WALKER.

GEORGE WALKER, the subject of the following memoir, was born about the year 1735, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The family from which he descended may be traced to a considerable antiquity; and it has been transmitted by them as a kind of hereditary anecdote, that an ancestor in the reign of James I was reluctantly advanced to the honours of knighthood. The reader will recollect, that an obsolete law of the second Edward, which, affixing the value of a knight's fee, compelled every one, who possessed lands to that amount, either to assume the rank and duties of a knight, or compound by the payment of a stipulated sum, was revived by the arbitrary James, for the pur-

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pose of replenishing his exhausted coffers. Few at that time aspired to the distinction, as it involved in it very important services, and reduced the possessor of it to a state of great dependence, by obliging him personally to attend in the field, or to incur the penalty of an arbitrary fine. The estate, which thus subjected the owner to all the burdens and the honours of knighthood, had been in the possession of the family for more than a century, being originally either a gift or a purchase from Henry VIII. From that time to the present it has been enjoyed by them, in an uninterrupted succession from father to son, and is now held by William Walker, esq., of Killenbeck Hall, near Leeds, cousin-german to the author of these volumes, who has in his possession the king's original transfer.

Though his father's circumstances must have sensibly felt the expenses of a numerous family, yet at no period does this appear to have operated to our author's prejudice, by depriving him of any of those advantages necessary to qualify him for the exercise

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exercise of a profession, to which he appears to have been early destined. He received the rudiments of his education at the grammar-school of Newcastle, then under the care of the Rev. Dr. Moises, a clergyman of the church of England, but a man of great liberality of sentiment, and who had deservedly acquired a very high reputation for the rapid progress of his scholars*.

In this situation he gave early indications of a distinguished character. Before he had attained the age of five, he had made so considerable a proficiency in the Latin language, that he was deemed fully competent to enter upon Cæsar's Commentaries. This rapidity of attainment, the consequence of a superior capacity united to a more than ordinary share of application, was not accompanied, as is usually the case, with that

* This gentleman has had the honour of educating several, who afterward attained to very considerable eminence in life, among whom may be numbered the present Lord Chancellor, and his brother Sir William Scott.

gravity

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gravity of temper and conduct, that seems to forbid a participation in the sports and exercises congenial to the period of youth: on the contrary, he possessed all the characteristic cheerfulness of a boy, and entered with more than common ardour into the juvenile amusements of his school-fellows. For his rapid progress in school learning he was no doubt greatly indebted to the judicious care and attention of his master, who appears early to have distinguished him from the rest of his pupils, and to have bestowed upon him a more than ordinary share of attention.

In a visit to Newcastle about four years ago, our author availed himself of the opportunity of calling on this respectable character, then in extreme old age. The meeting between the venerable tutor and his early pupil was singularly cordial. The Doctor spoke of him as of one, whom he was proud to enumerate among his scholars, and of whom he had early formed the high expectations, which he had lived to see realized. A few letters,

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letters, with which the Doctor had occasionally favoured the author in after life, are strongly expressive of the continued interest that he felt in the welfare of his pupil, and the favourable opinion he always entertained of his character and talents. After the publication of one of his fast sermons in the year 1782, which was dedicated to Mr. Pitt, at that time the champion of the whigs and the zealous promoter of reform, the Doctor, in a letter to the author, declares, that he had perused it with great eagerness; "for though," adds he, "our speculative opinions are different both in politics and religion, this difference could never conceal from me great ingenuity, invincible honesty, and deep learning; and then 'twas impossible but that my best wishes would be interested in the prosperity of the possessor of such talents. The address to the minister is sensible, intrepid, and yet sufficiently civil. The part of the sermon, which relates to the doctrine of a superintending Providence, is well argued,

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" and handsomely illustrated from history ;
" and indeed through the whole composi-
" tion there appears to be an indignant dis-
" dain of vice, and such zeal for reforma-
" tion, as must have had a powerful effect
" upon your hearers. &c."

Under the care of this excellent man he continued till the age of ten, when he was sent to Durham, in order to be placed under the immediate direction of his uncle, the Rev. Thomas Walker, minister of the dissenting congregation at that place, a gentleman of considerable eminence in his profession, but who, from the freedom of his speculative opinions, seems to have been considered by some of his contemporary ministers as entertaining unsound and heterodox tenets. The presbyterians had not yet altogether emancipated themselves from the errours and religious prejudices, which in former times had so strongly marked the character of their sect; and many of those controverted points, the truth of which cannot be clearly established upon any

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any express revelation of Scripture, but which had been formerly considered as essential articles of faith, were still in some measure regarded as the necessary terms of admission to a ministerial communion. That simple and rational conception of christianity, which admits of nothing as essential to the office of a christian minister but a belief in it's divine origin, and a practical adherence to it's precepts, and which regards all other disputed doctrines as the speculations of fallible men, as mere human inventions altogether foreign to it's genuine meaning and simplicity, had not yet superseded the use of those particular creeds and confessions of faith, which were deemed to contain whatever was sound and orthodox in christian belief. From the influence of these contracted notions of religion he was happily freed in having his education intrusted to the care of his uncle, who impressed no bias on his mind in favour of any particular tenets, but left it wholly free to adopt those opinions, which should be the result of a rational, manly, and impartial inquiry.

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In this situation he was particularly fortunate; for, independently of the advantage that he derived from the constant superintendence of his uncle, he was regularly sent to the grammar-school of that town, then in the highest celebrity as a place of classical education. Mr. Dongworth, the head master of this seminary, was a person of extraordinary endowments, and possessed of every natural and acquired talent, that could conciliate affection, or command respect. Though exacting at all times the greatest deference to his authority, yet his system was rather to conciliate by a kind and liberal treatment, than to awe into submission by the terrours of magisterial severity. But the highest panegyric that can be passed upon his character is the universal esteem and veneration, in which he was held by his scholars. No time could efface from the mind of Mr. Walker a sense of his numerous excellencies, and to the latest period of his life he uniformly dwelt upon his memory with the fondest recollection; and with a warmth of attachment, that bordered

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dered upon enthusiasm, he has often declared, that he anticipated with pleasure the time, when he should again be reunited with him in another world. The influence of a man thus loved and honoured must have operated with the most beneficial effect upon the minds of his pupils. At a period of life the most prone to imitation, before usurping prejudices and inveterate habits have yet established their dominion, there is a natural propensity to the prevailing sentiments and manners of those with whom we associate; and particularly where we are taught to look up to them as our instructors, and the objects of our imitation. The benefit which society derives, therefore, from the exertions of an individual thus qualified for the arduous task of education, is altogether incalculable; for the influence which is thus early obtained over youth is never perhaps wholly obliterated; in some measure therefore he may be regarded as the parent of their minds, as the modeller of their future lives.

There is a curious epistle, which he wrote to

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to his father shortly after his arrival at Durham, complaining of a want of constancy in his pursuits, and how much his attention to his school duties had been diverted by that propensity to novelty, so natural to the ardour of youthful minds. This, like all the rest of his early productions, bears the strongest marks of a vigorous and active mind, and evinces a maturity of capacity and judgment, that might almost enable him to rank with those literary phænomena, whose precocity of intellect and attainments have excited so much curiosity and astonishment.

"You will no doubt," says he, "be sufficiently satisfied of the natural inconstancy of your son, and how impossible it is for him ever to continue steadfast to any one employment, when you see how like a rebel I have shook off the yoke of Hogarth and other celebrated painters, after it had begun to grow tolerably easy to me, and willingly entered into the service of the Muses, a service which preys upon my thoughts night and day without intermission.

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"mission. The only satisfaction I can pro-
"pose to myself is, that you above all won't
"be angry with me, nay that you will even
"be pleased at my servitude, and beg my
"mistress to lord it over me with more im-
"perious sway. I beg, father, that you
"would accept kindly the first-fruits of a
"genius yet unripe, and which perhaps may
"promise something better when at matu-
"rity. The letter enclosed I wrote on pur-
"pose to show the natural wavering of my
"mind, for which I have been often upbraid-
"ed by Mr. A."

The enclosed letter, to which he alludes, was a poetical epistle to his father, in which, after enumerating the variety of objects that had occupied his attention at different times, he observes that the Muses, willing to augment the number of their votaries, had at length retained him in their service, and had bound him fast with a chain, which it was his pleasure to wear. This epistle appears to be the first-fruits of his devotion at their shrine; and though they had not yet bestowed upon him any very sublime portion

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tion of their inspiration, yet he courted their aid with such assiduous zeal, as to merit from them a more grateful return. His constancy in the end was not allowed to go unrewarded, for at an early age he could boast of a more than ordinary share of their protection; as a proof of which we refer the reader to a few of his imitations of the more celebrated odes of Anacreon*.

Though he seems to have presumed upon his father's approbation of this his last pursuit, yet it is certain, that it was regarded by some of his friends as no very favourable symptom of his future attainments. Mr. A., the gentleman to whom he alludes in the last letter as having upbraided him for his fickleness, in a letter to his father about the beginning of 1748 speaks of him in the following terms:

"George has this day entered at the writing-school, and wants nothing but application, to do well there, or at any other school. I am spurring him up every day; so that I believe he looks upon me as his

* See the Appendix.

"con-

" continual tormentor. His greatest unhappi-
" ness is, that he is fond of every new thing,
" and as soon weary of it. Were it possible
" to bring him off this temper, and to fix
" him at any study, which would be to his
" advantage, I should not doubt his profi-
" ciency. I wish when you write you would
" talk to him pretty warmly on this head,
" for this is his failing, and it must be cor-
" rected in time, if ever he make any pro-
" gress in any point of learning, otherwise
" he will have a smattering in every thing,
" and in reality know nothing. I must own
" I cannot but respect him on account of his
" parts, and could wish to see him make a
" proper use of them. I am sensible that
" all his faults are owing to his natural tem-
" per, which has too much of spirit and vi-
" vacity in it. I therefore believe, that harsh
" usage would not do with him, as it might
" break his spirits, and make him indifferent
" about every thing: the best way would be,
" to recommend to him for his own interest
" to leave off painting, poetry, and nonsense,
" which will never make him a halfpenny
" richer

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" richer or wiser, and to apply himself to " his school learning; and when he has any " vacant time, let him employ it in reading " history, or any other useful book, which " may be of service to him afterward. Were " you to do this yourself, it would have a " greater impression upon him, than any " thing I could say. I should not have said " so much, but that I find you intend to " breed him a scholar."

What impression these fears made upon his father is uncertain. He continued to indulge his passion for poetry, though not with so much hindrance to his school duties as is here supposed: on the contrary, in a letter to his father in December 1748, a very flattering testimony to his proficiency is borne him by his uncle, who thus expresses himself:

" I should be glad to know what your " resolution is about George. As he has " made such progress in school learning, I " hope you design to complete him as a " scholar. Indeed it would be throwing away " all the money you have laid out upon him

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"not to do it. He is a boy of a very pro-
"mising genius and fine parts; and as a few
"years more at his books would fit him for
"public usefulness, I would have you by
"all means put him forward. It will not
"only be doing him justice, but it will be
"your easiest way of providing for him in
"the world. If he has his health, and his
"application is in any degree answerable to
"his parts, I make no doubt but he will
"one day shine in a bookish profession;
"but in any other way of life (his particular
"turn of mind considered) there is very
"little reason to think he will make any
"figure at all. I have a great desire, I con-
"fess, that George should apply himself to
"the study of divinity; in which way it
"may possibly be in my power, if God shall
"continue my life, to be assisting to him
"more ways than one."

It was at this period, that his destination for the ministry was finally decided. In consequence of this, and of his uncle's removal to Leeds, having been chosen pastor of the Mill-hill meeting-house of that town,

it

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it was thought advisable, previous to his studying at one of the Scotch universities, to remove him for some time to a dissenting academy at Kendal, under the care of Dr. Rotheram. He was accordingly sent thither at the latter end of the year 1749. In this situation he still continued to indulge his taste for poetry; it was here that he composed the greater part of his imitations of Anacreon, a few of which are inserted * as specimens of the proficiency which he had made in an art, to which in his early youth he was so much devoted, and of the excellence to which in all probability he would have attained, if he had continued to indulge his imagination at the expense of the more serious and profound studies, in which he was afterward engaged.

If we may judge from a catalogue of the books that he took with him to Kendal, among which were two editions of Euclid, s'Gravesande's Institutions, Sherwin's Tables, &c., he must already have entered upon the study of the mathematics. It is how-

* See the Appendix.

ever

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ever certain, that during his residence here he pursued it with great vigour. His ardour indeed in the prosecution of his studies was so great, as to occasion considerable uneasiness to his friends, lest his health should fall a sacrifice, and induced them to remonstrate with him upon the necessity of remitting in some measure the severity of his application. The effect of these admonitions was but temporary, for he appears soon after to have brought on a severe fit of illness by his excessive and unremitted attention to his books.

In 1751 he left Kendal*, and removed the same

* From the following extract of a letter written at this time to a fellow-student, it is probable that he experienced no very important benefit from his residence here. "I will tell you of a piece of practical knowledge I have "lately gained. Our good academical tutor thought it "not his duty to instruct me in this or in any other "kind of practice, but, as some recompense for the "sums he got from us, filled our brains with a deal of "fine speculative knowledge, without once showing the "several useful and entertaining purposes, to which "these particular branches of learning were adapted. "We have learnt plane trigonometry, and to measure

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same year to Edinburgh. Among other recommendatory letters he had one from his uncle to principal Wishart, which was of considerable service to him, as it introduced him to the particular notice of that gentleman, who was pleased to honour him during the whole of his residence there with many personal attentions. He enjoyed also the advantage of pursuing his mathematical studies under the tuition of the celebrated Matthew Stewart. As hitherto probably his reading upon these subjects had been chiefly under his own direction, it was fortunate

"towers and castles upon white paper, without know-
"ing that a quadrant existed but by name. We have
"learnt spherical trigonometry, without the convenience
"of a globe, and with but a faint idea of the situation
"of the several circles in the various positions of it.
"We have read philosophy, without being assured that
"there was a planet in the heavens, unless our faith were
"much greater than our experience: and lastly we have
"studied astronomy, without the knowledge of one
"star in the firmament. But to return from this digres-
"sion to my subject. Pleased with the view of your
"quadrant, I have made one of copper, about 17
"inches radius, which is long enough to admit of a
"degree

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fortunate for him, that in the further prosecution of this science he had the assistance of so eminent a master, who was remarked for the purity of his taste, as well as the elegance of his demonstrations founded on the clear and perspicuous style of the ancients. In a letter to his uncle he thus describes the different studies in which he was engaged:

"Morality, criticism, and some of the "higher branches of mathematics, are the "public classes in which I am engaged. The "second is taught by the professor of logic,

"degree of the quadrant to be divided into 8 parts, "though I have yet divided it only into 4. To prove "the exactness of it, I measured a window; when my "observation wanted not 3 inches of the truth in 25 "feet. Not content with simply using it for taking "altitudes, I fixed to it a piece of copper movable on "the centre, with two sights upon it, and two also on "one side of the quadrant, by which means I can ap- "ply it to surveying, where the angles don't exceed 90 "degrees. This use of it is indeed amusing, and yields "an agreeable satisfaction, to be thus enabled to measure "inaccessible heights and distances: yet easy as it is, I "knew nothing of it till you first pointed it out to me, &c."

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" who gives lectures likewise on Longinus and " Aristotle's Poetics; and how just and useful " his remarks are may easily be judged by the " universal applause they meet with, though " without any ornaments of dress to set them " off. An acquaintance with some of the " rules of criticism is certainly, if not abso- " lutely, necessary, since it tends immediate- " ly to form the taste in reading, and guide " the judgment between those two equally " injudicious extremes, of ill-naturedly cen- " suring and ridiculously extolling every " thing we read, &c."

In another letter to a friend he unbosoms himself completely upon the subject of his present situation and the state of his mind:— after describing the variety of his occupations, he adds, " Do not suppose, that I " would image myself to you as a labori- " ous student, who naturally feels more de- " light in reading a battle of Homer, or a " crabbed controversy in theology, than " when a boy in striking a quoitor a tennis- " ball. Nature has not been so indulgent

" to

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" to me, as to make what is necessary so high-
" ly agreeable; for however generous she
" may have been to me at my birth, either
" she herself, or habit, or perhaps both, have
" dashed the present with a mixture of indo-
" lence, that has been my darling foible since
" I first knew a letter; and even in riper
" years not even the fear of a rod could
" closet me with a classical author, when
" the temptation of play and diversion with
" companions of my own stamp interfered.
" Since the period indeed when ambition
" and pride could have a proper influence
" upon me, the spirit of emulation, the
" desire of answering if possible the warm
" expectations of my friends, and what my
" own ambition may have imagined, and of
" sustaining with some tolerable repute the
" public profession I am designed for, have
" made me industriously strive to curb
" this passion, before my character in life
" could draw it's complexion from it; and
" whether I have succeeded or no, or whe-
" ther I am deceived, and necessity alone

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" makes me virtuous, I know not; but " (vanity apart) I cannot but be pleased to " find with how much satisfaction I can " spend my time in the pursuit of philoso- " phy natural and moral. To it I have sacri- " ficed all inferior sciences, as amusements " more proper for a settled period of life, " than an age when industry and application " must lay the ground-work for the whole " of it. Hogarth I have discarded, indeed " it is some time since he has been out of " favour. But the Muses grumble hard at " the little respect I pay them, and perhaps " mean never to assist me in any composition " for the future. But when I petition them, " then may they deny me! For to say the " truth, the flights and raptures of a poeti- " cal imagination are but luxuriant branch- " es in the composition of a sermon, and " rather veil than give a lustre to the good " sense which may attend it: for 'tis not " the eloquence of words without a mean- " ing, or the smoothness of the periods, that " constitute an orator, but the justness of

" his

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" his arguments, the method of arranging " them, the knowledge of mankind, and " withal the honesty of his own sentiments, " and fixed regard for truth, which is his " constant prompter, and gives life and irre- " sistible spirit to the whole harangue."

In this lively description may be clearly discerned a predominance of those sentiments and feelings, by which his subsequent character and writings were so strongly marked. There is indeed throughout the whole of it a justness of sentiment, and an accuracy of style, that would characterize it as the production of a maturer age. Though his inclinations strongly led him to mathematical pursuits, yet he did not suffer himself to be engrossed by them to the neglect of those particular studies, which were necessary to qualify him for the exercise of his future profession. In consequence of this he soon after determined to sacrifice the advantages, which this situation afforded him, of prosecuting these inquiries, and to remove to Glasgow, where he had better opportunities

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of cultivating, what he always regarded as his prime object, theology. Accordingly, after having at his own request spent the intervening vacation with his uncle at Leeds, that he might have the further advantage of his assistance, he entered as a student of this university at the latter end of 1752.

The chair of divinity was at that time filled by Dr. Leechman, whose learning and liberality did honour to his situation. His lectures were undebased by any tincture of bigotry or prejudice; there appeared in them no particular attachment to any sect, no espousal of any favourite tenets; it was his primary object to establish the fundamental truths of natural and revealed religion, and thence to deduce such reflections, as were calculated to impress upon the minds of his pupils the excellence and necessity of those doctrines, which they enjoined. It was the custom of Mr. Walker, to commit to short-hand the heads of the lectures during the delivery, and afterward to re-

compose

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compose them with such additions as his memory served to supply; by which means he was enabled more thoroughly to imbibe the spirit of them, and to fix them in his mind.

Soon after his arrival he was chosen a member of a club, that met alternately at each other's lodgings for the purpose of literary discussion. Each individual in his turn was obliged to supply the subject of the evening, either by the contribution of an original paper, or a translation of some celebrated passage from the ancients. The discussion which followed the reading of the paper generally occupied two or three hours. Mr. Walker was very sensible of the advantages, which he derived from such an institution. The desire of excelling in these literary disputations stimulated the mind to exertion, a spirit of emulation was excited in the compositions which they were required to furnish; and as they generally came prepared for the evening's encounter by a previous consideration of the subject, it frequently

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quently happened, that a considerable degree of information was obtained from their free and unreserved communication of sentiments.

Though the mathematical department was at that time filled by Dr. Robert Simpson, the editor of Euclid's Elements, and the author of several mathematical works, yet he declined entering as one of his students. Probably he had made so considerable a proficiency, as to have advanced beyond the regular reading of the classes; or he might choose to dedicate more of his time to those studies, that were immediately connected with his theological pursuits. He enjoyed however the private friendship of the Doctor, and was frequently assisted by him in his mathematical inquiries. Though profoundly erudite in the science, Dr. Simpson was never regarded by Mr. Walker as possessing an elegant taste, his demonstrations being at times unnecessarily long and tedious, and devoid of neatness and perspicuity.

The university at that time exhibited such a con-

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a constellation of literary characters, as perhaps no single seminary of education could with justice boast. Beside the two gentlemen above mentioned, luminaries of the first magnitude, the celebrated Dr. Adam Smith lectured upon moral philosophy, the professorship of humanity was occupied by Mr. Muirhead, and that of Greek by Dr. Moore. All these were men eminent in their several departments, and might vie with any, who had ever filled these distinguished seats of learning.

The period was now approaching, when he was to relinquish the peaceful studies of an academical life, and adventure upon the busy theatre of the world. The part that he was called upon to sustain was of more difficulty, than what is allotted to the generality of it's actors. It required an exemption from those minor blemishes and imperfections, that might have passed unnoticed in subordinate characters, but in him would have impaired those excellencies, that were to enable him to support it with dignity

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nity and propriety. He has answered the trial; he has performed the part assigned him; and through every varying scene he has trodden the stage with honour and applause. The curtain has at length dropped on him, and he is seen no more; the approbation or censure of the world can no longer affect him: we may therefore, in conformity with the maxim of an ancient sage, definitively pronounce upon the part that he has performed, we may retrace his path of life, and hold it up to the imitation of those, who are destined to succeed him.

In the spring of 1754, he returned to his father's house, having finally left college. He was now a candidate at large for the ministerial office; but, as no situation immediately presented itself, he commenced his professional career by occasional assistance to the neighbouring ministers. It is probable, that his first sermon was preached at his native place, as his mother, who was a strict church-woman, sacrificed on this occasion

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casion her religious scruples to her desire of witnessing her son's initiatory address. If she decided however by this first exhibition, she would not have augured very favourably of his future success. A more trying situation can scarcely be imagined, than where a young man for the first time addresses an audience to whom he is personally known, and where he is conscious that the anxious fears of his friends, the expectations of his acquaintance, and the curiosity of all, are strongly excited. The fear of disappointing their hopes increases his diffidence, and induces a perturbation of mind, that debilitates his powers and enfeebles his delivery. Mr. Walker experienced this strongly in the present instance, as it occasioned such a depression of his voice, that he was sometimes scarcely audible.

At the latter end of this year he again visited his uncle, with the intention of remaining with him till he was regularly established as a minister. There he frequently preached to his congregation, which generally

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rally consisted of a thousand hearers. His uncle observed of him on this occasion; "I have had an opportunity of hearing "George preach several times, and think he "promises exceedingly well. His compo- "sitions are really good, and have no fault "but one, that they are too elaborate for the "lower sort of people; but I do think, if he "applies himself to theological studies and "compositions for three or four years, he "stands the chance of being one of the first- "rate preachers among the dissenters. His "reading his prayers indeed is not so well "relished by some, but when I say by "some, I mean only the weakest. The "more intelligent approve of it, and speak "of the contrary only in condescension to "their prejudices. I have advised George to "attempt praying in this way, and doubt "not in a little time, and with a little pains, "he will be as ready and expert at it as "others."

When we reflect upon the peculiar excellence of his extemporaneous prayers, it is singular,

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gular, that at this period it should have been regarded by him in so formidable a point of view, as to be deemed a difficulty altogether insurmountable. A sense of what was due to that venerable Being, in whose immediate presence he was standing, and the fear of addressing him in irreverent language, and in a manner unworthy of his exalted nature, could alone have occasioned this diffidence of himself in an exercise, which otherwise his general facility of expression must have rendered easy, and which was more consonant with his fervent piety, and the character of his mind and feelings. In a letter to a quondam fellow-student he has very forcibly expressed his sentiments on this head; and as it contains general observations applicable to the subject, it is here inserted:

"I doubt not you have heard of my "having offered myself to the service of "any presbyterian tribe, that wanted a "spiritual consul; and as it becomes me to "be diffident of my own abilities, I should "be

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" be mighty glad of sharing the honour
" and burden with a colleague. But why
" should I talk of consul and colleague?
" When I think of the insurmountable dif-
" ference between my own temper, man-
" ners, and sentiments, and the general cha-
" racter of the electors, I have little hopes of
" pleasing them in any station, unless I
" could play the Vicar of Bray, and cut my
" coat orthodox or heterodox, talk sense
" or nonsense, as my interest dictates. I
" have heard accidentally of many objec-
" tions since I commenced probationer; but
" there is one above all the rest insuperable,
" in which every one agrees, and which
" nevertheless I shall not attempt to obviate,
" unless I were assured of some preterna-
" tural assistance. The thing is this,—I pray
" with notes, rather than not pray at all,
" for this is truly the state of the case. And
" yet so obstinate is prejudice, as to make
" no allowance for difference of nature and
" abilities. You would laugh to hear their
" pretty notions of extempore prayer, that it
" comes

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" comes reeking warm from the heart, that it
" gives all the glory to God, shows a distrust
" of human abilities and confidence in the
" operation of the Spirit, which will surely
" assist those who put their trust in it, and
" expect it's inspiration in a sanctified place;
" but that on the contrary the prayers,
" which the spirit of man has composed in
" an unhallowed closet, are cold and lifeless,
" have more reason than devotion in them,
" in short, might have answered very well
" in the time of Paganism for an address to
" Jupiter, but have not sufficient rapture to
" warm the heart of a zealous enthusiast,
" nor stocked enough with those magical
" words, which without meaning so strange-
" ly, as with a mechanical impulse, affect the
" common class of hearers.

" The greatest wound that ever christia-
" nity received has been from the absurd
" and ridiculous inventions of its professors,
" who seem as if they despaired of equalling
" the sublime and rational duties it recom-
" mends, and therefore study to reduce it
" to their own low and grovelling capacities.

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"Because themselves have no idea of a "manly and decent manner of worshipping "a supreme Being, they would compel every "one to measure by their standard, and by "this means give offence to all of an open "ingenuous mind, and often bring the best "and noblest institutions into scandal and "reproach. Some are uncommonly blest "by nature, and without much premedita- "tion can speak with great propriety and "elevation of thought; but for every one "to presume on the like abilities would be to "swell like the frog, and burst in the at- "tempt. But in my opinion, where such "distinguished abilities are wanting,—to "lead the devotions of a whole audience, to "speak their sentiments, and disclose their "affections, which relate to the most august "and venerable object in nature, requires "some forethought and consideration; and "to attempt it without these assistances "would be an affront to the audience, and "the Being before whom they are as- "sembled."

Notwithstanding his extreme reluctance on

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on this occasion to fall in with the prejudices of his sect, yet he found a compliance with them absolutely necessary, to remove an otherwise insuperable bar to the exercise of his profession. In consequence therefore of the repeated and earnest entreaties of his friends, he determined to make the trial, "though," says he, "few I believe can conceive the difficulty, with which the conquest must be gained. I preach for Mr. Lowthian on Sunday morning—when I am determined, whatever be the event, that my papers shall not appear—*Fortuna favet forti*; or, to speak more in character, May a spirit of devotion banish every difficulty!" Of his success there is no doubt, for from this time he rarely if ever read his prayers.

His excessive application, which he still continued, and his sedentary life, were productive of their usual consequences, in inducing a series of complaints, that disqualified him altogether for pursuing his studies. In the beginning of this year he was seized

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with a succession of ague fits, attended with profuse perspirations, excessive faintness, violent headaches, and a loss of appetite, that amounted to an absolute loathing of food. He was attacked also with a violent inflammation in his eyes, occasioned by a too free use of them during candlelight; and his sufferings from this cause were so violent, as to occasion no little apprehension, that they would terminate in a total loss of sight. Sea-bathing and a suspension of all mental exertion were recommended by his physician. Accordingly in the beginning of autumn he undertook a journey to the coast. In this retirement he abandoned himself to those pleasing sensations, which the mind experiences in the relaxation from its severer labours, when, secluded from the realities of life, the noise and interruption of the world, it sinks within itself, abandons itself to the train of its reveries, and indulges in all the luxury of fancy. In the following letter he has so beautifully described the pleasures flowing from this state of the mind,

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mind, that we shall offer no apology for inserting it.

" I am later than my promise; neverthe-
" less excuse me. My punctuality in letter-
" writing I hope will never be admitted as a
" test of my friendship; as I am sure to
" my own heart it is none of the real respect
" and love I bear to many, who have found
" me grossly deficient in the article of cor-
" respondence. Since I left Leeds, I have
" spent most of my time at the sea-side,
" much to my satisfaction, and I hope
" not less so to the benefit of my health.
" If my abilities corresponded with my in-
" clinations, I should never be contented till
" I had procured a summer retreat on the
" coast, which would still be rendered more
" agreeable by its vicinity to a frequented
" harbour, which affords a variety of enter-
" tainment to a speculative mind, that pos-
" sesses so much interest in humanity, as to
" partake in some measure of the feelings
" of the sea-faring-man, whose very happi-
" ness flows with the tide or turns with the

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" wind. I have wandered for hours amidst
" rocks and sands in a pleasing absence of
" thought and care, when a pebble or a
" shell has afforded me as much pleasure as
" a mathematical problem. At other times I
" would draw figures and diagrams on the
" sand, which the next wave effaced, when
" suddenly a view of some natural conve-
" niency of situation would suggest the idea
" of a harbour, and by the magic aid of a
" certain powerful enchantress (hight Imagi-
" nation) rocks were removed, piers were
" raised, channels were cut, and a port at
" once created, which the same omnipotent
" lady filled with those gallant wonders,
" that so astonished the Indians. These
" romantic chimæras would then be anni-
" hilated by some distant prospect at sea,
" which would raise a new train of imagi-
" nations, till the object that occasioned
" them vanished from my sight. I then
" walked idly sauntering along the shore,
" gazing with a placid delight on the vast
" ocean, and the endless uniformity of its
" motion,

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" motion, when some high-swelling wave,
" which over-topped the rest, and rolled on
" in state and majesty till on a sudden it
" broke with a loud noise upon the shore,
" brought to my idea the picture of a proud
" overgrown mortal, that swells for a while
" above his fellows with all the insolence of
" pomp and imaginary greatness, only to
" make his fall the more conspicuous and
" violent. Weary at length with the tedi-
" ous uniformity of such a sight, I would
" stoop to cockle-shells or whatever attract-
" ed my curiosity, and would thus idly
" spend another hour, till the whole en-
" chantment of the day would be broken
" by an unmannerly knight, whose prowess
" none ever withstood, (known to mankind
" by the name of Hunger,) whose command
" unable to resist, I left my Paradise, like
" Adam, with weary steps and slow. Not
" however like him, never to return, for
" such was my daily occupation, when the
" weather permitted me, which was much
" finer than any we had had during the

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" summer, as if it sympathized with the ge-
" nius of the place, and complaisantly with-
" held every rude unmannerly blast, which
" might banish the graces that wantoned
" around. David speaks of the sun rushing
" like a bridegroom from the chambers of
" the east, but the month that I spent here
" must certainly have been his honey-moon,
" he wore so constant a face of joy, while
" all nature returned the smile; winter,
" which seemed already to have devoured
" it's prey, was compelled to retreat with
" precipitation; summer and all it's gay at-
" tendants were recalled, vegetables and
" animals rejoiced, pleasure danced around,
" and health,

" The best-lov'd gift of Heav'n to humankind,
" Came sweetly-smiling on each breeze of wind.

" This was happiness too great, long
" to continue. Summer is gone at last,
" winter has fixed it's hold, and all looks
" dreary and uncomfortable. Head-aches
" and agues stare me in the face. The noise
" of a town, and the confinements of a study,

" and

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" and the tedious round of weekly labours " are returned. All my quondam friends are " dispersed, and I feel half a stranger even " in my native town. Sed levius fit patientiâ " Quicquid, &c. This is my situation: what " is yours? &c."

He had now for nearly two years been looking out for some fixed situation, when he received an application from a small congregation assembling at Platt, a village in the neighbourhood of Manchester. In consequence of this, he visited them in company with his uncle, and officiated two Sundays; but the stipend that they were enabled to offer (only 40*l.* per annum) appeared to him insufficient for a comfortable subsistence in so expensive a neighbourhood. This consideration induced him to decline the offer; which he did with the less regret, as he had much reason to be dissatisfied with the members for their total inattention to all personal civilities during his stay; a circumstance that augured not very favourably of the pleasantness of a future residence among them.

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them. His rejection of this situation facilitated his election to one much more eligible; for in the course of this year he was chosen the minister of the congregation at Durham, where the memory of his uncle's former services would no doubt operate much in his favour, and introduce him to more than an ordinary share of the attention and friendship of his flock.

As he was now regularly established in the stated office of a minister, it was thought necessary, that he should undergo the ceremony of ordination. This was accordingly performed at a meeting of ministers convened for the purpose in October 1757, a practice now very much disused among the rational dissenters, and which will probably in a little time be altogether laid aside. Having satisfactorily answered the questions proposed, he received ordination as a minister in the following terms:—"These are to certify, "that the Rev. George Walker, having "preached a sermon, and exhibited a Latin "thesis from a subject assigned him, and "publicly

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" publicly delivered a confession of his " faith, was this day solemnly ordained, as " witness our hands, &c."

It is probable, that none of the ministers assembled contemplated this ceremony in any other light, than as a solemn approbation of the individual as fitted by his character, his talents, and his faith, for the exercise of that profession, to which he had devoted himself. The notion of their acting in any apostolic character, and communicating to him by some secret and supernatural interference certain peculiar powers, must have been discarded by all as a remnant of popish folly and superstition; nevertheless there were many among the dissenting laity, who yet retained so much of the old puritanical spirit, that they would have deemed the sacrament but imperfectly administered by any but a regularly ordained minister, and have regarded the act of baptism by any other as nugatory and inefficacious.

There is nothing very particularly record-

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ed of him during his residence at Durham, that is much entitled to notice. His habits of life appear to have continued uniform, and his health to have materially suffered from his inordinate application to his studies. Under the signature of P. M. D.* he was at this time a frequent contributor to The Ladies' Diary, and solved therein many very abstruse questions, that attracted the notice of the mathematicians of the day. It was at this time also, that he finished his Doctrine of the Sphere, a work of which he had laid the foundation in very early life, having commenced it before he was eighteen. This was partly undertaken as an amusement, and partly to remove from his mind the inaccuracies, obscurities, and inelegancies, which disgraced every system, that had as yet been published upon this department of the mathematics. The elements of the sphere, with the branches dependent thereon, had hitherto been but imperfectly

* Presbyterian minister, Durham.

attempted

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attempted in a geometric style, or had been subjected to the slovenly hand of Algebra. The essay on spherics by professor Simpson, which is now annexed to his edition of Euclid, was defective in it's extent. The general doctrine of the sphere, which is the foundation of the whole; the geometry of spheric angles and triangles, together with the important science of projection, had been wholly neglected by him; and even the trigonometry of spheric triangles, which was his professed object, is far from being complete, some of the most elegant and useful theorems having been omitted. As an appendix to the work, he has subjoined a problem for ascertaining the apparent time of an observation, together with the latitude and longitude of the observer; in the solution of which he has for the first time taken into consideration the variation in the latitude and declination, by which means, in all lunar observations, notwithstanding the great variation of the declination, the longitude of places ashore may at any

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time be determined with considerable accuracy; and if at some future period an instrument should be invented, that would give the altitude of the moon with as much accuracy as that of the sun, this problem would be of very great importance, as a more perfect method, and less liable to errour, than the lunar one now pursued for discovering the longitude at sea.

Various circumstances contributed to render unpleasant the latter part of Mr. Walker's residence at Durham. Though the stipulated salary ought to have exceeded 50*l.*, yet it had averaged considerably less; and the payment of this, from some culpable neglect, was always protracted. A lukewarmness and indifference about religious concerns, too, had generally pervaded his congregation for a number of years, and had previously been a source of great dissatisfaction to his uncle; for nothing certainly can tend so strongly to discourage the well-meant and earnest endeavours of an ingenuous mind, as to find them accompanied with little or no effect.

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Independently of the personal mortification inflicted, the consciousness that you are scattering your seed upon a barren soil, where no friendly culture, no diligence of attention, can nurture it into maturity, sinks the mind at once into languor and despondence. At one time he was so overwhelmed by these considerations, that he had serious thoughts of abandoning his profession, as affording no prospect of advantage either to himself or to others. After detailing the various causes of his discontent in a letter to his uncle, he continues: "Every "thing is discouraging. Even on Sundays, "when I should look for my only consola- "tion, I meet nothing but solitude and in- "difference; yet I sit here indolently repining "at my lot without endeavouring to better "it..... I am doomed to have no prospect "in life, either of a private or public, a selfish "or benevolent kind; to be flattered with "the notion of abilities more than common, "yet to no end; to be of no importance to my- "self, or to any one around me; to waste my "youth

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" youth and health in hardly providing for
" my daily wants, while tomorrow is all un-
" certainty; yet all this (I lay my hand upon
" my heart and say it) owing to no conscious
" misconduct on my part. Perhaps you
" will say, I betray a discontented mind. I
" do not think so. Were I old and feeble,
" I should think it my duty, to sit down
" resigned; but while I have youth and
" abilities, I think I owe to myself, and to
" the world, to endeavour to extricate my-
" self out of so mortifying, so impotent a
" situation. You do not however in your
" last approve of such an intention, and my
" friends at Newcastle join with you in
" opinion. I submit therefore, to sacrifice
" myself and all my hopes."

During this unpleasant state of his mind, he was invited by the congregation at Great Yarmouth, to become one of their ministers. In answer to their inquiries respecting him, the following spirited character of him was sent them by the Rev. Mr. Lowthian of Newcastle:

" New-

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"Newcastle, 19 October, 1761.

"My dear Friend,

"Your last is before me, to which "I would have replied sooner, had I not been "indisposed: I think myself honoured by "the deference you and the gentlemen con- "cerned have paid to my judgement, and "will endeavour to secure your good opinion "by using the same openness and freedom; "though 't is with some reluctance I give you "a character of Mr. George Walker, appre- "hending it may contribute something to "my being deprived of a very agreeable "neighbouring brother: but friendship de- "mands, and I will comply.

"The method of his compositions is al- "ways natural, and consequently adapted to "excite and secure attention;—his invention "is lively, but under the correction of judge- "ment;—his diction is pure and elegant, "and his delivery spirited (some think too "theatrical)—his devotional performances "are animated and fervent, flowing from "grateful piety and warm benevolence: in

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" these however he is apt at times to hesitate
" a little, owing I apprehend to his being too
" nice and scrupulous in the choice of his
" epithets, and therefore I hope time will
" remedy it.—In his ordinary conversation
" he is frank, cheerful, and facetious; but
" prudently so.—He is apt to be somewhat
" keen in argument, but 't is more in his
" manner than in his temper.—In short, in
" him you will find a good scholar, a rational
" popular preacher, a young man of irre-
" proachable morals, a steady and an affec-
" tionate friend.—Thus, my dear sir, you
" have the mere outlines of the young gentle-
" man's character drawn without art or co-
" louring, from personal acquaintance and
" my own knowledge, and you have my
" free leave to make what use of it you
" please, for I am confident he will do ho-
" nour to my recommendation.

" SAM. LOWTHIAN."

Dissatisfied with his present situation, he had no hesitation in acceding to this proposal, though the place which he was to fill was

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was rather that of an assistant than a colleague to their other minister; for at that time a distinction generally prevailed, which is now disregarded; the elder of the two ministers, or rather he whose residence with the congregation had been of the longest continuance, was considered as their pastor, and a larger salary was annexed to his office; the other was regarded as in a subordinate station, and his services, though probably of a more laborious nature, were less amply remunerated. Such petty and ill-judged distinction suited not the liberal mind of Mr. Walker, though, while the inferior station was the lot assigned him, it became him not to object. But at a subsequent period, when a similar distinction would have been kept up in his favour, he requested, that no such difference might obtain; for, he observed, every man was worthy of his hire; as joint labourers in the vineyard both were entitled to an equal recompense; both were the fellow servants of the congregation, engaged

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in the same design, pursuing the same end, and in their offices and duties alike.

However desirable upon the whole it might be to him to leave Durham, yet it must have been with some regret, that he quitted a situation, which many circumstances would still continue to render interesting to him. His character had by this time become thoroughly known and respected; but very lately he had been complimented by the corporation with the freedom of the city; he had formed many particular intimacies and friendships, which so distant a removal might probably dissolve for ever; he was abandoning the neighbourhood of his family and relations; the pulpit that he was about to relinquish had been the first to receive him as a minister, and his mind was still more strongly attached to it by the recollection of the many years, that his uncle had previously filled it; Durham was the scene of many of his infantile amusements, and was endeared to him by the recollection of many juvenile

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juvenile attachments; on this occasion therefore scarcely could he quit it for ever, without casting *a longing lingering look behind.* It is probable, however, that Mr. Walker accepted this invitation with the more pleasure, as it brought him into the neighbourhood of a gentleman, with whom in early life he had contracted the strictest friendship, a friendship that was afterward continued on both sides with that reciprocal affection and esteem, which arise from a similarity of tastes, of habits, and of opinions. This gentleman was Dr. John Manning, who had for some time been settled as a physician at Norwich. Their acquaintance originally commenced at Kendal, was afterward renewed as fellow-students at Edinburgh, and upon Mr. Walker's removal to Glasgow was kept up by a regular correspondence and occasional interchange of visits.

When the Doctor heard of Mr. Walker's intention of removing to Yarmouth, he wrote to him in terms expressive of the strongest attachment, and of the sincere pleasure with

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which he anticipated the renewal of their former intimacy. "It is with a happiness," says he, "that you can better imagine than "I can describe, that I heard of your reso- "lution to preach at Yarmouth: I have never "once entertained a surmise, that your "friendship for me was abated, and I can "assure you, that mine remains the same "as you formerly knew it. I have often "spoke of it to my old and my new friends, "for I always consider, that I draw honour "from the relation of our former intimacy, "for we were not associates in debauchery, "George, but in wholesome studies and "innocent recreations."

Mr. Walker had not been long settled at Yarmouth, before he received an invitation from the congregation at Coventry. This was the second application, that had been made to him from that quarter; and in the year 1755 he was preparing to visit them, in compliance with their request, when he was rather unhandsomely superseded on their part by some favourite minister, who in the

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the interim had rendered himself the object of their choice. Whether it were from a resentment of their former treatment, or the pleasantness of his present situation, certain it is that he declined the offer, though the salary exceeded by one third what he was then receiving.

About this time he experienced a great misfortune in the death of his uncle, who after a short and painful illness of three days expired on the 9th of November 1763, leaving behind him a character, that few have equalled, perhaps none have surpassed. He was a man of the most liberal and enlightened mind, of great professional acquirements, of an excellent understanding, which he had highly cultivated by reading and reflection, of the most undeviating rectitude of life, and of a kind, generous, and friendly disposition. His attachment to his nephew was throughout uniform and constant, indeed his kindness and attention to his interests on all occasions could scarcely have been exceeded, had the tie of their

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relationship been still closer. Greatly therefore on every account must he have lamented his loss. His father had already paid the debt to nature; there was now therefore no one left, to whose friendly advice and assistance he could have recourse; for the future he was to be dependent on himself alone, his own guide, and his own counsellor.

Shortly after his removal to Yarmouth he commenced his work on the conic-sections. The design of this undertaking suggested itself to him on reading the universal arithmetic of Sir Isaac Newton. From the 24th Prop. of that book he was persuaded, that the elements of all the properties of the three conic sections might be unfolded with more ease and elegance, than had been obtained by any other method. Though the property of the generating circle was an immediate consequence of the primary proposition, yet it was for some time hid from his view. By means of this he was conducted with order and facility to every principal

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cipal property of the conic sections. He soon observed, that all these sections have more connexion with the circle than with the cone; nor is it at all wonderful, that it should be so, since the circle is the principal element, from which the cone itself is generated. The circle being therefore the common genesis of the three sections, the properties which are common to them all are deduced from the common source in one common demonstration to a much greater extent, than in any treatise which deduces the section from the cone; while the discrimination of each of the sections, being a simple variation of the common genesis, not only suggests the discriminating properties, but gratifies the understanding with the immediate perception of the operating cause of them. Indeed the affinity to and dependence of the sections upon the circle is so immediate, that the demonstrator has often little more to do, than to transfer the various properties of the circle to the corresponding properties of the section. These observations

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tions are here introduced as explanatory of the nature and design of a work, which for many subsequent years furnished a constant source of agreeable occupation to his leisure hours.

The same intemperate application to these and his other pursuits still characterized his habits of life; and a variety of consequent complaints compelled him to occasional intermissions of his studies. It is probable, that from the commencement of his taste for mathematics may be dated that want of œconomy in the distribution of his time, which led him to appropriate to the prosecution of his studies so many of those hours, that, with his infirm state of health, would have been more wisely given to sleep, and the restoration of exhausted nature. For months together has he retired to rest with the rising of the sun, and, till within a few years of his death, when his strength was not equal to such arduous exertions, it was his usual custom to prolong his studies to an advanced hour of the morning. He seems

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seems at all times to have considered his body as the mere slave to his mind, and to pay no other attention to it, than what it's necessities absolutely required. Experience however sufficiently demonstrates the injudiciousness of such a system, and it's tendency to defeat the very object, that it has in view. The powers of the mind require to be renewed by occasional interruptions of ease and relaxation; and all extraordinary efforts are calculated only to impair it's vigour, and to induce a premature decay of it's faculties. Though he was happily exempt from the misfortune of experiencing the latter effect, yet there is no doubt, but that his intemperance of application was attended with serious injury to his health and strength; and most of those bodily complaints, under which at various periods he suffered, were the result of his sedentary life. Yet we must not condemn this imprudence with too much severity, lest we include in our censure many of the wisest and the best of men, who have done honour

to

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to human nature. The mere man of the world, occupied in the common concern of business or amusement, may prescribe to himself such a stated regulation of his time, as is best adapted to the nature of his pursuits; nor is there any thing in them, that forbids a practical adherence to it; but the student, who is buried in the profound contemplations of his closet, is abstracted from the world and all it's forms, he is not to be broken in upon by the ordinary calls of life; absorbed in his abstruse speculations, he is wholly inattentive to the lapse of time; nor does he cease from his intellectual exertions, until the powers of his mind, exhausted by intense application, require to be invigorated by an intermission of it's labours. These observations apply with peculiar force to the mathematical student. When the truth to be evolved is dependent upon a long connected series of deduction, where in regular progression it is to be elicited step by step, any sudden diversion of the mind breaks at once the train of it's ideas,

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ideas, and destroys the order of it's reasonings. There is too in the nature of this science above all others what is peculiarly attractive, and draws on the mind as it were by a kind of violence, in the pleasing satisfaction that it derives from the gradual unfolding and discovery of truth, as well as in the certainty of it's conclusions. While in every other walk of science doubt and uncertainty more or less prevail, the mind reposes on the deductions of mathematical investigation with the most unlimited confidence. Even in history, which ought to record with truth and impartiality, as professing to instruct by example, to communicate knowledge and wisdom to future generations by the experience of the past, the cautious reader is afraid of giving full credence to the tale that it unfolds. He is aware how many facts are destitute of foundation, how many are misrepresented by prejudice and passion, how many are totally suppressed by ignorance or design; aware how little we can enter into the motives

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tives of the agents, from which the very colour and character of their actions is derived; how little we know of many of those subordinate causes, that have operated to produce important changes, and are necessary to their complete elucidation. Had we full information in all these respects, in what a different light should we contemplate many of the events of history, and what opposite conclusions should we deduce from them! Again, what are all the objects of metaphysical inquiry but at best ingenious speculations, on which the difference of opinion that prevails sufficiently demonstrates the insufficiency of the evidence, with which they present themselves to the mind? Many of them are confessedly beyond the reach of human comprehension: in our inquiries upon these subjects, therefore, we are wandering only in uncertainty, and if at any time a gleam appear to break in upon us, it is only to render more visible the darkness, with which we are surrounded. The lucubrations of classical learning will scarcely admit

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admit of a competition. In comparison with these noble theories they are acknowledged, by one the most competent to decide*, to be but mean and grovelling, undignified and destitute of beauty. If the encouragement to these studies therefore be thus inviting, and the labours thus recompensed, no wonder that the mathematician pursues them with a more than ordinary zeal; for what can be a more sublime object of inquiry, more worthy of our rational faculties, more suited to the dignity of our natures, than the investigation and discovery of truth? and truth of the noblest form, that can present itself to the mind of man; that discloses to us the primary and fundamental laws, on which the œconomy of the material universe depends, and from which all the order and variety of motion proceed, and to which above all we are indebted for that true system of philosophy, which is the boast of modern times, and which represents all the conjec-

* See Life of Gilbert Wakefield.

tures

tures of the wisest ancients as but the infancy of human genius. Those sublime discoveries, which have raised the human intellect to such a height of glory, which have afforded the noblest proof of what the mind of man can do, are founded on the laws of mathematics, those original truths, which owe not their existence to secondary causes, but are fixed in their very essence, eternal and immutable, on the basis of which alone therefore *true* philosophy can stand, and whence all our *certain* knowledge can alone be derived; they may therefore be considered as immediate emanations from the divine mind, imparted to us by God, that we might not altogether wander in doubt and darkness, but discern something of the manner in which he operates in nature, and trace his stupendous power and greatness in the creation and government of the universe.

It is a weakness incident to man, to overrate the importance of that to which he is particularly devoted; but the mathematician may

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may perhaps be exempted from this charge, when the superior dignity and usefulness of his science are considered, and the services which it has rendered to all the elegant, convenient, and useful arts of life. In this world of proportion, number, and mechanism, in which we are placed, there is scarcely an object to which our attention can be directed, that the comprehensive science of mathematics does not include within it's range. But independently of it's practical utility in the business of life, mathematical knowledge, though it should never be applied to the arts and sciences, cannot be admitted to the mind, without contributing to it's most valuable improvement. The more enlarged conceptions, which it gives us of the things around us, invigorate our intellectual powers, train our minds to order, to clearness, to precision in our ideas, habituate us to close and solid reasoning, teach us to guard against the illusions of fancy, to break through the entanglements of sophistry, and to seek for and to rest in conviction; but

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conviction founded on the best evidence, that the nature of the subject admits. In fine, it places the mind in the happy medium between credulity and scepticism, the two extremes of human weakness and human presumption. Bigotry and scepticism can scarcely find admittance to the heart of a mathematician. To doubt of truth was not the property of Pythagoras, Plato, Bacon, Boyle, Huygens, Euler, Maclaurin, or Newton, but of the *unmathematical* Epicurus, Lucretius, Herbert, Spinosa, Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon.

As every pursuit, to which a man is more or less inclined, produces a correspondent effect upon his character, conduct, and sentiments; so there is no doubt, but as a mathematician Mr. Walker must have experienced the ennobling influence of that study, to which he was so much addicted. Perhaps therefore we may be excused for this digression, from it's intimate connexion with our present subject.

About this time Mr. Walker was applied to

to by a gentleman of great respectability, to undertake the charge of his eldest son. This was his first entrance upon the business of education, and for this he was indebted to the strong recommendation of Dr. Priestley. With the Doctor he had for some time been intimately acquainted, and a frequent correspondence at this period subsisted between them. From some of the Doctor's letters it appears, that Mr. Walker had at his request furnished a few papers for the Royal Society, which were to have been inserted in their Memoirs; but the person to whose care they were intrusted having mislaid them, they could never afterwards be found. It was probably in consequence of these communications, that he was soon after elected one of their members. As no memorandums of these papers are existing, it is impossible to ascertain the subjects of them; but the following extracts from the Doctor's letters allude to them, and are here inserted, as affording a singular proof of

the indefatigable activity and literary ardour of his mind.

"Your two quarto manuscripts, which "you imagined you had left on the road, "are safe at ——. I wish they were in your "possession, because I think they would be "of service to you, in drawing up a few "more papers for the Royal Society. I was "in hopes, that before this time I should "have received your communication for the "Repository.... I have been writing two "small controversial tracts, and a piece on "church discipline, which I was led to think "of from what you said to me on the sub-"ject. I am afraid however you will not "like it. I have prepared for the press an "enlarged edition of my *Essay on Govern-"ment*, and as soon as I *shall have dispatched "a few more small articles*, I shall sit down "in good earnest to the History of Experi-"mental Philosophy, proposals for which I "have printed.... 18th of March, 1770. "On Thursday next your papers will be pre-

"sented

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" sented to the Royal Society, but it may be
" several weeks before they can be read....
" A friend of mine, to whom I communi-
" cated your query about the doctrine of
" fluxions, writes to me from Paris, that
" the mathematicians there know of no
" treatise containing such a demonstration
" as you mention: but they tell him there
" is a sketch of something of the kind in
" the Encyclopédie. If you have no op-
" portunity of consulting it, I will do it for
" you when I am in London. I wish how-
" ever you would send your papers to Dr.
" Price, who will present them to the Society.
" I do not return to Paris.... As you have not
" studied Hartley, it would be to no purpose
" to write to you about metaphysics. I be-
" lieve nothing of any *original determina-*
" *tion of the mind to objects of morality*, or
" any other objects: and though you and
" Mr. Hutchinson say *there must be* such
" things, I do not see a shadow of proof for
" it. I do not expect however, that the
" reading of Hartley will convince you, any

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" more than another reading of Hutchinson
" would convince me. We are both too old,
" to adopt a new general system of metaphy-
" sics. . . . I have lately been very successful
" in the prosecution of my experiments on
" air, and intend soon to draw up a supple-
" ment to my Treatise on that subject. I
" have two more acid airs, the vitriolic and
" the vegetable, and also a species of air
" got from red lead, and other substances,
" that is near six times as good as common
" air. This very remarkable fact I hope will
" lead me much farther. . . . I am also about
" to publish A Harmony of the Evangelists
" in Greek and English, upon the plan of
" that in the Repository. If you have any
" thoughts on the subject, I shall thank you
" for the communication of them."

Mr. Walker's marriage at this particular period prevented his acceptance of a situation, which in other respects would have been highly desirable. The late Marquis of Lansdown had applied to Dr. Price, to recommend to him a gentleman of *character and*

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and extensive knowledge and learning, who would be willing to undertake the education of his two sons. The Doctor, in a letter to Mr. Walker on this occasion, observes, "You "were the first I thought of, and I have "mentioned you to him, and represented you "as possessed of all the qualifications he "wants.... You would find yourself un- "der no disagreeable restraints, and he "would consider you as his companion and "friend.... Indeed I shall think, that I "have well rewarded him for the civility "with which he has treated me, could I be "the means of helping him to such a com- "panion for himself and tutor for his chil- "dren, as I believe you would be, for there "are few of whom I think so highly. I am, "with great regard and esteem, your very "humble servant, R. PRICE. August 3, 1771."

In a subsequent letter, he says, "His lord- "ship proposed staying abroad six or seven "months, he has left this business wth "me, and he seemed very anxious about it. "But while I can have you in view, I shall

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"not think of applying to any other per-
"son.... The treatise I have lately pub-
"lished has gone off better than I expected.
"The London Societies are in general alarm-
"ed. I wish I may prove the means of
"either breaking them, or engaging them
"to reform. They have in their present
"state a very pernicious tendency. But
"what I most wish is, that the observations
"I have made on the national debt may be
"attended to. I look upon you as one of
"the best judges of this work, and should
"it have merit enough to recommend itself
"to your approbation, I shall be happy.
"It is the fruit of much study, and I am
"glad now to turn my thoughts to other
"subjects."

Mr. Walker's sole objection to this proposal was the idea, that the services required in such a situation would have interfered too much with his domestic comfort as a married man; it was however afterward accepted by Dr. Priestley under the same circumstances.

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It is rather a singular circumstance, though one which reflects no little honour on Mr. Walker, as showing the general estimation in which his character was held, that he should have been separately selected, by two persons so capable of appreciating individual merit, as the most competent in their opinion to discharge the duties of an office, which perhaps of all others requires the greatest union of natural and acquired talents. It is not merely sufficient for the tutor of youth, that he possesses a knowledge of such elemental parts of learning as generally form the basis of education; but to this it is requisite that he should unite such other qualities, as are calculated to engage the esteem and confidence of those who are intrusted to his care. Where he can thus gain the hearts of his pupils, he is enabled to be of far more advantage to them, than by any knowledge he can communicate in the mere formal lessons of tuition: every moment of their connexion he is conveying to them the most valuable instruction—by his

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his example and conversation he is gradually forming their minds to the most liberal and generous sentiments. That Mr. Walker really had this influence over his pupils, their strong and continued attachment to him through the whole of his life is the strongest testimony. No man perhaps ever possessed in so high a degree the art of conciliating the affections of young minds. For a period of thirty years, during which he engaged in the business of education, whether in a private, or in a public capacity as a professor in the dissenting colleges of Warrington and Manchester, it would be no exaggeration of the truth to affirm, notwithstanding the variety of character and disposition which he must necessarily have encountered, that he nevertheless universally inspired the minds of his pupils with sentiments of respect and attachment to his person. There is in youth a wonderful discrimination of character. The pretender to qualities which he does not possess, to attainments of which he is ignorant, will not escape the ordeal of their

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their examination; the imposture never fails to be detected, and the discovery of his insufficiency is productive only of contempt. If by a pompous and affected exterior he attempt to preserve that respect, which is due only to real merit; if he be characterized by a cold and forbidding manner, by a morose and austere deportment; if there be any thing mean and sordid in his views; if in the treatment of his pupils a spirit of selfishness too visibly predominate; he never fails to become the object of their scorn and aversion. In the present instance they met with every thing that was eminently the reverse; they discovered an understanding not circumscribed within the boundaries of their own immediate pursuits, but extending to almost every walk of science, embracing even those more abstract and profound studies, the comprehension of which confessedly requires the utmost stretch of the human intellect. And these high attainments were unaccompanied with any of the superciliousness of literary pride; in his deportment there

there was no assumed dignity or importance, but throughout the most unaffected simplicity of manner; in the familiarity of intercourse, to which his pupils were admitted, the tutor was lost in the companion and the friend; while in his whole conduct towards them there was evinced the most perfect liberality and disinterestedness of disposition. Such an assemblage of great and amiable qualities compelled them at once to reverence the instructor, and to love the man.

At the close of the year 1771, he received an invitation from the society of the Old Meeting at Birmingham, to succeed their late minister, the Rev. Mr. Howell. Though nothing could exceed the cordiality that subsisted between himself and the congregation at Yarmouth, yet a regard to his situation as a married man induced him to accede to this proposal, which would the better enable him to provide for all the duties that might spring from so interesting a relation. In consequence of his acceptance of this situation, a house was provided for him, and every

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every necessary preparation made for his reception. Previously however to his finally leaving Yarmouth for this purpose, he was applied to by the trustees of the Warrington Academy, to undertake the office of mathematical professor in that institution; and as this was a situation for which he was eminently qualified by his talents and acquirements, as well as extremely coincident with his general habits and inclinations, he felt no other hesitation in immediately accepting it, than what arose from his recent engagement with Birmingham. In this dilemma he consulted his friend Dr. Priestley, through whom he had received the invitation to Warrington. The Doctor in his reply observed, that it would be much easier for the people of Birmingham to provide themselves with another minister, than the Academy with another tutor; that the duty which he had to perform in this case was so different from that of a minister, that it could not be considered as quitting one congregation for another; and that those whom he had consulted

sulted upon the business made light of his engagement with Birmingham. His friends in general pressed him to the same choice, apprehensive that his health and strength might prove unequal to the services of so large a congregation. Under these circumstances he wrote to his friends there, acquainting them with the overtures that had been made to him, and his real inclination with respect to them; entreating at the same time to be released from his engagement; a request which of course was complied with, though a source of general disappointment, and even of great offence to many, who on other accounts entertained toward him the greatest respect and attachment. It is probable, that Mr. Walker's secret inclinations gave more weight to the arguments of his friends than he might otherwise have thought them entitled to; certain it is, that upon more mature reflection he severely condemned his conduct on this occasion, and as the only means of atonement in his power he declared, that, under whatever circumstances

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he might afterwards be placed, he should ever regard himself as under an engagement to Birmingham.

But whatever degree of blame might be imputed to him on this account, it met with more than it's deserved punishment in the total failure of his expectations at Warrington, to which place he removed in the latter end of the year 1772. It is matter of just surprise, when we reflect upon the very distinguished talents, that have contributed to the support of the different dissenting colleges established at various times throughout the kingdom, that they should have so generally failed of accomplishing the object of their institution. Of the causes, that have principally contributed to their gradual decline and downfall, none perhaps have had so general or so fatal an effect, as the want of permanent established funds adequate to their liberal support. At the time of which we are speaking this circumstance operated peculiarly to the disadvantage of the Warrington seminary. In consequence of it's limited resources, the pro-

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professorship of divinity was the only one, to which a regular salary was annexed; while the income of the other departments was made to depend upon the fees paid by the students: and as the number of these was at all times uncertain, and extremely fluctuating, the emoluments of Mr. Walker's office became not only very precarious, but so small as to be insufficient for his immediate support. By the advice of his friends Doctors Price, Priestley, and Franklin, with whom he appears to have been then acquainted, he continued for some time to struggle with the inconveniences of his situation; but the affairs of the college presenting no better prospect of an ampler remuneration of his services, his resignation became no longer a matter of choice, but of necessity.

During his residence at Warrington he published his Treatise upon the Sphere, principally for the purpose of accommodating the students who attended his lectures. This is generally acknowledged to be the most masterly treatise upon the subject extant, and

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is remarkable for the purity of the language, and the elegance of the demonstrations.

But if there were no other merit to recommend it to the student, the construction of the solid figures wherever they are required must render it of superior utility. The time and labour employed in the contrivance and final preparation of these figures greatly exceeded that of the composition of the whole work besides. To furnish 500 copies to the public required the cutting out of more than 20,000 figures, which were afterward to be divided, pierced, fitted, and the whole inserted in the planes to which they are adherent; an immense undertaking, and a species of mechanical employment peculiarly irksome to a man of taste and genius. This production, the result of so much patient industry and laborious investigation, was sold to Mr. Johnson for the small sum of 40*l.*: and even this was afterward voluntarily remitted by Mr. Walker, as the sale had not indemnified him for the expense of publication. That a work of

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such acknowledged merit should have met with so little countenance from the public, strongly argues the decline of mathematical learning, which is perhaps no very favourable symptom of the literary taste of the age.

Mr. Walker's determination to resign his office was no sooner known, than he was chosen as one of the ministers of the congregation assembling on the High-pavement, Nottingham. His removal thither, in consequence of his acceptance of this situation, was in the autumn of 1774. This may be regarded as an important æra in his life, as from it may be dated his usefulness as a public character. He had very early been thrown into circumstances, that had contributed to give his mind a decided turn for public affairs. In the celebrated election for Durham in 1761, he had been induced, by motives of private friendship, to enter warmly into the contest; on which occasion his services had attracted particular notice, and were deemed very instrumental to the election of the

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the successful candidate. During his stay also at Yarmouth, where he subsequently resided, the dissenters possessed a very considerable political influence, which was in general successfully exerted in the choice of a representative of similar views and principles with themselves. Scarcely therefore could he refrain from imbibing a portion of that spirit, with which his friends and acquaintance in general were actuated. He had moreover, both as the effect of his education and of his own reading and reflection, formed very strong and decided notions upon the nature of civil and religious liberty; nor did he deem it inconsistent with his ministerial character, to act up to the spirit of the principles he had imbibed, whenever he conceived, that his public duty required it of him. Possessing such sentiments and a disposition naturally ardent, he entered with more than ordinary zeal into the discussion of all those questions, that in their consequences affected the interests of the public; and, whether the sub-

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ject had a reference merely to the local concerns of the town in which he resided, or embraced the more extended interests of the community at large, he generally acted a leading and conspicuous part. In this however there was no forward obtrusion of himself, no arrogant desire of dictating to a party, or of attracting the notice of the public; but it was the station which his character and his merit naturally assigned him, and was on the part of his associates a voluntary deference to superior talents and acquirements.

The peculiar circumstances of the situation, in which he was now placed, rendered his exertions as a public character still more extensively useful. The municipal jurisdiction of the town was vested in a corporation, that acted upon the same liberal and enlarged principles, as Mr. Walker had himself adopted for the rule of his public conduct, while the magistracy in general were members of that religious community, to which he was minister. These circumstances

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stances contributed to give a weight to his opinions, which his personal character alone would scarcely have obtained; but being united to such other qualities, as generally give a man an ascendancy in society, they procured him a degree of influence, which few private individuals have ever possessed. These opportunities of public good the active benevolence of his disposition did not permit him to pass unimproved; but on every occasion, in which his services might be beneficially employed, he exerted himself with a zeal and disinterestedness, that were influenced neither by a desire of popularity, nor an apprehension of personal danger. His removal to Nottingham but barely preceded the commencement of American hostilities; and as he approved neither of the grounds on which they were undertaken, nor the subsequent policy of continuing them, he exerted himself with considerable activity in opposition to so ruinous a measure. For this purpose he did not merely content himself with bearing his testimony

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against it's injustice and impolicy as a single and unconnected individual; but, by promoting the plan of public petitions, he gave that form and body to the expression of the popular voice, in which alone it could operate with effect. And to the honour of Nottingham it may be recorded, that, in it's endeavours for the preservation of peace, not only on this occasion but during the continuance of the late hostilities with France, she exhibited to the rest of the kingdom a singular example of political wisdom and of public spirit; which, had it more generally obtained, might have been the means of averting the calamities, that have marked the progress of those ill-fated wars*. These petitions, or rather remonstrances, that at various times were presented to the different departments of government, were the productions of his pen, and are distinguished

* In 1798 Mr. Walker left Nottingham. The late proceedings, therefore, of that town, which have been subjected to so much misrepresentation and unjust animadversion, were subsequent to his removal.

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by his characteristic energy of sentiment and language*.

In his ministerial character also Mr. Walker was led to advert to the circumstances of the times in three discourses, which, at the request of his hearers, were published in the years 1776, 1778, and 1784. The first and second of these were delivered on days appointed for a general fast; and the third on the day of thanksgiving on account of the reconciliation with America. Of the propriety of a compliance with these ordinances of government he entertained considerable doubts; and, as he has observed himself, he was induced to it more by the importunity of his best and soberest friends, than any approval of his own conscience. In after life he formed more determined opinions upon the subject, nor could any per-

* Mr. Burke was so forcibly struck with the spirit of one of these compositions, that in the subsequent debate to which it gave rise, he declared, that he would rather have been the author of it than of all his works.

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suasions have then induced him to have borne a part in such a solemn mockery of religion, such an unmeaning and hypocritical parade of humiliation and contrition, assumed at the mere bidding of authority, dictated by no feeling of a truly repentant spirit, which alone can sanctify the act, or render it an acceptable homage; and where, on the part of those who exact this appearance of national sorrow, it is accompanied by a renunciation of no one public or private vice, or scarcely one act, that manifests a spirit according with the penitent language of their proclamation. But however little sincerity might generally enter into this religious act, or whatever doubts he might entertain respecting a compliance with it, the honesty of his own motives is apparent, in the spirit that pervades these discourses, which are characterized by such a zeal for reformation, public and private, such an indignant disdain of vice, exhibited with so much vigour of sentiment and energy of language, as entitle them to rank

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rank not only among the best of his own compositions, but with any of the most admired specimens of the hortatory eloquence of the pulpit.

The little success that had attended the progress of the American war, the increasing distresses of the times, the vast accumulation of the public debts, joined to the fear of those consequences that might arise to the parent state from the total separation of her colonies, had spread a universal gloom throughout the nation, and excited the most alarming apprehensions for the future. With this general sentiment Mr. Walker deeply sympathized; and in the present discourses he has in feeling terms lamented the degradation of his country: but when he indulges his despondency so far as to predict her approaching decline; and to declare, that he even then regarded her only in the light of the venerable dead, he may be thought to have carried his apprehensions farther, than the nature of the circumstances justified. The reasons on which he grounded

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grounded this opinion, however, were not those, that are the most obvious to superficial observers. They were not the consequences of defeat, or a mal-administration of public affairs; for to these the energies of a virtuous people will always rise superior: but they were the well-grounded apprehensions of one accustomed sedately to reflect upon the causes, that contribute to the rise and fall of nations; one who possessed an enlarged and comprehensive knowledge of mankind, drawn from his own experience, and that of past ages, which taught him, that, as no state derived it's greatness from fortuitous circumstances alone, so none ever fell from the rank it held but by the decline of that public spirit and virtue, to which it owed it's elevation. This decline Mr. Walker saw, or thought he saw, in the general insensibility to national disgrace and humiliation; in the barefaced profligacy and dissipation of the great; in the open and avowed contempt for religion, and abandonment of all her precepts; in the prostitution

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tion of public character, which a Briton cannot contemplate without amazement, and which more than any thing indicates the decline of public virtue; in the increasing idleness and depravity of the lower ranks, who are the invigorating soul of a community, and who alone in the hour of danger can administer that support to a suffering country, which her exigencies may require. These symptoms, the history of every age and nation had taught him, were the sure forerunners of national decline; and whether he were justified in asserting, that his own country manifested these symptoms, must be determined by the character which she then exhibited, and has since continued to display. Yet, though he had no expectation of ever witnessing the revival of that ancient spirit, which had marked the better days of his country, this discouraging prospect did not sink him into that supine indifference, that indolent despair, which the extinction of hope produces on the minds of those who are animated to exertion

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ertion only by the prospect of success, and who act not from that steady adherence to principle, that conscientious discharge of duty, which are independent of circumstances, and which, aiming only at good designs, leaves the issue of events to the disposal of a wiser being.

In 1780, Mr. Burke brought forward his celebrated motion for a reform in the public expenditure. As a prelude to this, petitions had been presented from Yorkshire and other counties in support of the measure. Mr. Walker on this occasion exerted himself with considerable effect in procuring one from the county of Nottingham. He drew up the petition* for the occasion, and on the day of meeting supported it nearly in the following words:

"Gentlemen, I approach you as a plain "freeholder, on a level with the lowest in the "assembly. You may think perhaps, that "those who move in a higher sphere have

* See the Appendix.

"not

" not a perfect sympathy with you, and there-
" fore may not be displeased with the address
" of one, whose sentiments, interests, and
" views, must be presumed to be similar to
" your own: yet even in this view I should
" not think myself authorised to detain you,
" if it did not appear to me, that some very
" material views of the question have been left
" unnoticed, even by gentlemen who have
" so ably distinguished themselves in the
" defence of the petition, and the petitioners'
" cause. To these views I would confine
" my attention. The wisdom and expedi-
" ency of the people's interfering in the bu-
" siness of the state rest on the supposed
" abuse of the public money, and the danger-
" ous influence, which this abuse has given
" to a minister, over the freedom and in-
" tegrity of Parliament. Many striking and
" well selected instances of this abuse and
" this influence have already been exhibited
" to your view; but I am convinced, that both
" the abuse and the influence are of much
" more alarming extent, than have already
" been

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" been stated. In order to produce the same " conviction in you, I beg leave to lay be- " fore you a few plain facts, in which the " expense of the present administration in " various departments will be compared " with the expenditure of preceding admi- " nistrations in exactly similar, or rather " more urgent, circumstances.

" The expense of Embassies in the reign " of William III amounted to 45,000*l.* per " annum, and during the last glorious and " complicated war of George the Second to " 50,000*l.* per ann., an increase only of " 5000*l.* But of late years this article has " been increased to 98,000*l.* per ann., exceed- " ing the expense of embassies in both the " former reigns, and very nearly double to " the higher charge in George the Second's " reign. This proportion of doubling the ex- " penditure of the most interesting periods " on every article will be found, in the se- " quel of comparison, to constitute the lowest " rule of ministerial extravagance in our " days; but for what benefit to the state one

" embassy

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" embassy under the direction of the present
" minister has tended, is beyond the power of
" the rack to extort from either him or his con-
" fidents. Another article of public expense
" is Secret Service Money, which, however
" invidious to the ears of an Englishman,
" yet, from the numberless agents that are
" necessary to carry on an extensive plan of
" policy whether in peace or in war, cannot
" be altogether avoided. But as it is of this
" delicate nature, and cannot for prudential
" reasons be fully subjected to account, every
" minister of integrity and honour will be
" sure to act therein with the greatest mo-
" desty, and expect to be justified by the ap-
" parent benefit of which it has been pro-
" ductive, and of which every one may
" judge. Now in this same interesting war
" of George II, when the arms and policy
" of that wonderful minister, Mr. Pitt, em-
" braced almost the whole globe, the charge
" of secret service money amounted to
" 44,000*l.* per ann., while in the year 1777
" th s charge was swelled to 86,000*l.* per ann.,
" the

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" the same near approach to double. But " by what proportion shall we estimate the " benefit to the state from this increased ex- " pense? Let the hireling advocate of mi- " nistry, the protester, who has no feeling " for his country's wrongs and disgraces, " say!—The Extraordinaries" (an article which he explained in familiar terms to the plainest freeholder) " through the whole ex- " tent of King William's war, of nine years' " duration, amounted nearly to one million " and a quarter; and of Ann's war for ele- " ven years to two millions; of George the " Second's first war, which was ended in " nine years, to three millions and a half; " and for the first four years of his second " and last war to three millions six hundred " thousand pounds. While the same article " for the first four years of the present im- " politic, inglorious and fatal war is charged " at nearly eight millions and a quarter; and " for the year 1778 alone at upwards of three " millions. Thus the Extraordinaries of the " army for one single year of the present " war

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" war are very nearly equal to the whole
" extraordinaries for twenty years war of
" William and Ann, wars of the greatest
" extent, difficulty, and exertion, as well as
" glory. And the same Extraordinaries of
" the first four years of the present war ex-
" ceed all the demand for twenty-nine years
" war of William, Ann, and George II, by
" one million and a half; and are one
" million more than double to the extraordi-
" naries for the first four years of George II
" last war; though the army voted by Par-
" liament for those years of George II's
" war exceeded the army voted for the
" same term of the present war by thirty-
" three thousand men. Yet expense blushes
" to look upon the present war, while in
" George the Second's contest with the
" whole house of Bourbon she proudly bore
" her fruits from every quarter of the globe,
" —The Navy Debt is what the Minister
" dares to contract, and involve his coun-
" try in, beyond the provision of Parliament
" for this great bulwark of all our com-

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" merce, power, and glory: and where the
" national benefit answers to the debt in-
" curred, it may perhaps be justified; but it
" has been reserved for our day to bear at
" once the most liberal grants of the public
" money, the boldest anticipation of future
" sums, and the acknowledgement of the
" ministers, that the fleet of England is too
" weak to chastise the perfidy and ambition
" of an enemy, whom but yesterday she had
" driven out of the seas. This navy debt,
" at this moment, exceeds eight millions;
" while at the close of the last memorable
" war, when the British flag was seen tri-
" umphant in every sea of the globe, and
" gave a serious alarm to every power in
" Europe, the navy debt did not amount to
" six millions, and the addition to this debt
" in the single year 1779 is nearly three mil-
" lions, more than half of what was incurred
" throughout the whole progress of the last
" war; the last war indeed, as it was the
" highest, of England's glory. This is a
" gloomy tale to tell to English yeomen;
" and while your petition asks the disclosing

" of

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" of these iniquities, an Englishman almost
" shudders to look into so dark and ruinous
" a scene.

" Worthy of this profusion, this contempt
" of the people's distresses, as of the nation's
" disgrace, are a thousand other disburse-
" ments, which, however singly of smaller
" moment, all together form a dreadful ac-
" count. Near four millions have been re-
" mitted to North America; but for what
" purpose, remains for the Minister yet to
" say, as for the Parliament yet to ask of
" him. The drawing of bills upon the trea-
" sury by our governors abroad is but a
" novel business; this article in 1760, when
" the whole continent of North America
" was under the superintendance of English
" governors, amounted nearly to 14,000*l.*;
" but so determined is the system of increase
" in every form in which expense can insi-
" nuate itself, that in the year 1778, when
" hardly one British government existed
" there, this demand was swelled to what?
" to double? to triple? to quadruple? nay

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"to nearly seven times the former sum! "A musterer of German troops on the home "establishment is appointed at 5*l.* per day, "and a subordinate one at 3*l.* per day; this "might be tolerable while the levying these "ready instruments of blood carried the "face of duty to such officers; but they are "still continued and paid at the same glorious "rate, though the levies have ceased. The "generosity of the present system scorns to "resume on the poor trifling ground of "œconomy and the people's relief, what it "has once extended to any of it's favourites. "Another of these Muster-masters is ap- "pointed to officiate in America at 2*l.* per "day; but the gentleman quits neither "England nor his pay; he leaves it to the "grave to muster them. A Superintendant "of recruits is first appointed by this admi- "nistration, ingenious only in the invention "of expense; and this appointment, with a "herd of under-agents, has cost the nation "many thousands. Another new appoint- "ment is that of Inspector-general of the "forces

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" forces in the West-Indies at 3*l.* per day:
" this gentleman deserves so handsome a
" reward, as his inspecting talents extend to
" no less than the distance of three thousand
" miles from his charge, for nearer than
" this distance he never looked at the
" West-Indies or it's forces. The huma-
" nity of the Minister is touched with the
" neglected state of the sick and wounded
" soldier in America, and in 1778 he provides
" them a comforter in a Superintendant-
" general of the Hospital of the grand army
" at the rate of 3*l.* per day; but the piety
" of the superintendant-general recollects,
" that Heaven is the best comforter of the
" sick; to Heaven therefore he leaves the
" care, he quits not the English shore, and,
" only to transmit it to Heaven, receives the
" modest reward of so merciful an insti-
" tution.—A Receiver-general of the king's
" revenue in Canada possesses the same
" wonderful faculty also of doing all his
" duty at home, and what he has transmit-
" ted to the treasury is yet to appear; but

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"it already appears, that he has received "seven thousand pounds from the treasury "to make certain payments in Canada. To "these mustbe added a host of commissaries, "and under commissaries, with all their "retinue of clerks and servants, altogether "forming a Many-headed Monster, which, "though but of yesterday's birth, is grown "to a formidable size, and already eats the "honest bread of thousands and of thou-"sands. They are things of such undescri-"bable nature and use, that not only a mi-"nister, but general officers, and commissa-"ries general, can create as many of them "as they please. A cargo of about twenty "were consigned to a commissary-general "in America; but though he reported that "he had no occasion for them, the cargo "was not returned as improper for the "market, and they each continue to devour "their allowance from the treasury. Some "judgement may be formed of their ex-"pense to the nation from the confession of "the secretary at war, that by the death of

"only

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" only one of them, one pound ten shillings
" per day was saved to the treasury.
" Such are the facts which I proposed to
" lay before you, as exhibiting a much
" more alarming view both of the waste of
" the public treasure, and of the dangerous
" influence which this abuse must give to
" the minister, at whose will it is distri-
" buted. The saving to the public, if the
" prayer of your petition be granted, is not
" now to be estimated by thousands, nor by
" hundred thousands, but by millions. If
" the expense of the most interesting periods,
" when the national glory was carried to it's
" highest, as in the last war of George II, be
" stated as a decent rule of expense to these
" feeble and exhausted times, it will on the
" most moderate calculation save to the
" kingdom two million four hundred and
" one thousand seven hundred and sixty-
" seven pounds per ann. Which sum, by
" the retrenchment of unnecessary pensions,
" useless places, fees of office, scandalous
" contracts, and a thousand other wanton

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" modes of waste, cannot be increased to " less than three millions; more, by a vast " sum, than the whole amount of the Land " and Malt Taxes, those two great pillars of " the national revenue.

" And to what are these immense sums, " which neither candour nor party can carry " to the account of real use, applied? Wanton " as ministers are in the throwing about the " public money, they have some end in " view; they do not incur the curses of their " country for the pure delight of being " cursed; they do not give to their enemies, " to their opponents in or out of Parliament, " to those who set their faces against their " iniquities, but to their enlisted friends, " their abettors, and confederates. And what " the amount of this debasing, this over- " whelming influence must be, is no diffi- " culty to conceive; it is dreadfully felt, " and is the most important ground of the " nation's fears, of all those petitions and " associations, which the people who pay " the price of this corruption, and are doom-

" ed

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" ed to be the sacrifice of this influence, have
" at length thought it to be their duty to
" themselves, to their ancestors, and to their
" posterity, to engage in.

" If therefore, in spite of a concealment
" which may well be supposed to cover a
" thousand other iniquities, such a scene of
" profusion here meets the public eye; can
" any one, I do not say, who has common
" honesty, but who has only that interest
" in himself as not to be delighted with
" ruin, hesitate a moment in interposing to
" stop the progress of a mischief, which, if
" it proceed a few steps further, will pro-
" bably render all interposition vain? Is
" this the trifle, forsooth, which a high-spirit-
" ed nation must despise as beneath their
" notice? In the cause of country, of liberty,
" of repelling the ambition of an implaca-
" ble foe, it is generous, and worthy of a
" Briton, to face every difficulty, to be cheer-
" ful under every burthen. But a Briton
" is not so fond of want, as with more than
" a servile tameness to submit to private di-

" stress

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"stress and national disgrace; to bear the "hand, which, weak or impotent against "the enemies of Britain, is mighty only in "the spoil and plunder of it's country. "You must conclude, therefore, that the "ground of expediency and necessity, on "which your petition stands, is justified to "every one, who will not daringly and pro- "fligately set his face against public safety, as "at all meriting the attention of a wise, ge- "nerous, and free people.

"Thus justified in the wisdom and ne- "cessity of the measure, which with such "unanimity you have adopted, you are to "answer to the silly charge of Faction, of "being stirred and led in all your move- "ments by a disappointed party; and this is "the formidable argument, which is to beat "to the ground all your manliness and pa- "triotism. Faction is a bugbear of mini- "sters, the phantom with which they hope "to fright the honest from looking with a "too curious eye into their dark and wicked "proceedings.

"The

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"The term in it's proper acceptation is "certainly odious, but in the mouths of our "ministers it passes into praise: not to be "factious in their judgement, is to be a "partner or abettor of their crimes, it is to "be a tame or interested assassin of our "country. This calumny has been gene-"rously and truly disavowed by those, who "were the first movers to the part which "you have acted: but however voluntary "and honest in them, if the measure had "not found you equally convinced, equally "disposed to it, their summons and their "harangues would have been given to the "wind. But I will venture to assert, that "in all popular discontents, and even in "those revolutions, which have often fol-"lowed the too obstinate provocation of an "injured people, the faction of a few never "was, nor in nature ever could be the cause. "Grant that there may be factious and in-"terested leaders in the present instance of "the people's discontent; it is not their fac-"tion which has stirred your discontent,

"though

" though it may be found convenient to
" their faction to ally itself to you. The
" great body of the people can see and feel
" for themselves; nor do they quit their re-
" pose, and set their face against the armed
" hand of government, unless irritated by
" severe and home-felt injuries. It is rather
" true, that they will bear much; too much
" indeed, as is fatally witnessed by the over-
" throw of liberty in every other govern-
" ment of Europe; and if they should be
" roused by a sense of their wrongs to
" remonstrate, however mildly, against
" the misrule which galls them, they have
" need of all their caution, as government has
" infinite advantages in the contest, and one
" false step may subject the poor complain-
" ants to all it's jealous terrours. This every
" people well know, the liberality even of our
" government does not exclude this know-
" ledge; and therefore there is no tempta-
" tion to tread on this slippery ground, un-
" less when the last necessity calls; but,
" unless to such a people as this country yet

" boasts

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" boasts of, even the last necessity will call
" in vain. It is not therefore in human na-
" ture for the people to move at the wanton
" summons of a factious few, and I chal-
" lenge all history to furnish one single in-
" stance of such a fact. If it should be true,
" that men, who have no view but to their
" own ambition and interest, offer them-
" selves as your leaders in the present ques-
" tion, which ministerial profligacy may
" well believe; yet it is your previous dis-
" content, that has invited them to this
" union, and in your strength they may
" hope to find an assistant to their ambition:
" but observe, that even to answer this
" crooked purpose, they must put on at least
" the semblance of your virtue; and it is the
" peculiar happiness of your cause, that men,
" who set out with no honest, no generous
" intentions, are compelled to act in concert
" with you for the establishment of the pub-
" lic welfare.

" If it be futile and absurd, the charging
" upon a factious few the discontents, the

" resent-

" resentment, the interposition of the people;
" still more ridiculous is the plea of being ill-
" timed, of your petitions and interference
" tending to distress and weaken govern-
" ment, to divert, and to unnerve it's appli-
" cation to a most interesting war. Yes!
" in truth they are ill-timed, and for ever
" will be ill-timed, to the guilt which dreads
" a review, to the prodigality and corrup-
" tion which will never be sated but with
" the last penny you have to give. And
" shall you leave it to them to judge of times
" and seasons, who have thought the time
" of war, of the most arduous and compli-
" cated war, and stripped of half your
" means and resources, to be the time of
" waste and expense, beyond all experience
" of the most united and prosperous periods?
" Is it for them to promise the time, from
" whom the idea of a reform would never
" have originated at all; who have so driven
" you to the verge of destruction, that it is
" difficult to say, if the time of retreat and
" recovery be not for ever gone? It was an

" unanswer-

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" unanswerable argument, which has al-
" ready been urged to this evasive plea, that
" œconomy in all superfluous expense will
" give strength to useful exertions; that it is
" the only nerve of necessity: but I beg
" leave to observe to you, that this mighty
" plea, which is to turn aside your attention
" to your last interests, is refuted by their
" own concessions. They allow your peti-
" tion to be just. Where then is the oppo-
" sition? Agreed as you and they are in
" the wisdom and necessity of your de-
" mands; whence is the disturbance to come,
" which these anxious combatants for your
" country's glory so piously dread? You
" and they are at length, by their own con-
" fession, met upon the same ground, and
" have nothing now to do, but with har-
" mony and zeal to move onward in the
" only road, which remains for the rescue
" of your common country. But alas! the
" attention to this reform, by all confessed
" to be expedient, will rob them of those
" hours, those sacred hours, which these

" tender-

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"tender-hearted patriots cannot spare from
"the national safety in this hour of danger.
"And have they no hours of lounging, of
"dissipation, of revelry and debauchery,
"which their patriotism might give to the
"most patriot purpose? But if their ardu-
"ous stations have already left them no such
"hours of mirth and jollity, and all their
"time be devoted to careful counsel, and
"anxious planning of their dear country's
"good; why, a few honest unpensioned
"gentlemen, in or out of parliament, will
"ease them of all this trouble, extricate
"them out of this dreadful dilemma, answer
"the people's wishes, and leave to these
"painful watchmen at the helm all the
"hours, which are so fully and usefully em-
"ployed.—But the truth is, they mean not
"one tittle of what they say. I should in-
"sult your understandings, if I supposed
"that you had any faith in their concession
"of the wisdom and virtue of your peti-
"tions. This is an age of wonderful con-
"versions; but if your virtue and necessities

"had

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" had not obtruded this reform upon them,
" the last hour of Britain might have come,
" before any reform would have disturbed
" their repose. They hate, they dread re-
" form; but it is so cordial to every other
" mind, it comes so home to the honest
" wishes, to the pressing wants of the peo-
" ple, that they dare not frame in words a
" direct opposition to it. If they knew how,
" with any decency, to express a flat denial,
" they would: but thanks to human nature,
" that effrontery and profligacy, which we
" have seen extended to every other length,
" are yet unequal to this.

" Go on then, ye people of England, in
" the course in which ye have set out, and
" turn not to the right, or to the left, for
" all the shadowy phantoms, which those
" who wish you no speed may dress up to
" beguile or awe you. As from you origi-
" nated the good work, on your constancy
" and firmness entirely depends the bring-
" ing it to a happy issue, the obtaining all
" your wishes. Every art, every sophistry,

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" every false alarm, and hypocritical jea-
" lousy will be tried to disunite, to unman
" you; but if you suffer yourselves to be
" overreached, to be intimidated, you have
" made your last attempt for your country,
" for yourselves, and for your children;
" and you will fall below the level of other
" slaves; the character of Englishmen, the
" very character of men will not be left you.
" But I look for better things, I see no room
" for fear, for any thing but the most re-
" viving, animating hope. The line of the
" people's sufferance is past, and ministerial
" rapacity and oppression shrink before you.
" For as there is no power which ought, so
" there is no power which can withstand
" you, if you be not wanting to yourselves.
" See! the tide is turned, the ebb of Britain
" is over; and fair integrity, and generous,
" unbought patriotism; and decent, manly
" liberty; and all your truest glory are re-
" visiting this favoured island. Welcome
" them, seize them, hold them; and may
" that Being, who is propitious to honest

" and

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" and good designs, bless the British people " with all success!"

The next public question, that engaged his attention, was the subject of parliamentary reform. The unconstitutional influence of the minister had been so clearly evinced in the prolongation of the war contrary to the general sentiment of the country, that it became apparent even to the most prejudiced observer, that the House of commons was no longer the organ of the national voice, while the termination of those hostilities, which had been so obstinately persevered in by one parliament, having been effected upon the meeting of a new one, most forcibly evinced the impolicy of continuing for so long a period a trust that could not subsequently be revoked, and over which little or no control could be exercised. These glaring defects, to which with justice all the calamities of the country were attributed, had excited the general attention to the correction of those abuses in the representation of the people, which by

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destroying the independence of parliament, and detaching it's interests from that of the people, had rendered it a mere passive instrument in the hand of the minister. If the spirit which was manifested on this occasion, and which contributed to that celebrated decision of the house, that the power of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished, had received that encouragement *from above*, to which it's laudable and patriotic tendency entitled it, it might ultimately have led to such a reformation of public affairs, as every friend to the future happiness and prosperity of his country would have rejoiced in; but it has been the misfortune of the present reign, to have been uniformly marked by an alienation from those enlarged and liberal principles, which should characterize the administration of a free country: thus, while it met with every discouragement from government, there was not sufficient zeal and unanimity in the people, to give that necessary degree of confidence and authority

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thority to their leaders, to enable them to contend with so formidable an opposition, backed as it was by those seducing applications to the personal interests, the ambition, and the avarice of individuals. Year after year marked some flagrant dereliction of principle on the part of their leaders, till at length the all-corrupting influence of the court had so thinned the ranks of the reformers, that the virtuous few who remained could only lament the failure of their well-meant efforts, and the prospect of those evils, which such selfish and illiberal principles of government necessarily produce.

Of the various meetings which were summoned throughout the kingdom for the furtherance of this object, there were few so important either in respect of the number or the rank of the individuals who attended, as that which assembled at Mansfield on the 28th of October 1782.

On being requested by several who attended the meeting, to deliver his sentiments

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on the occasion, Mr. Walker rose and spoke to the following effect:

He wished rather to obviate objections, than to add any thing to the unanswerable arguments, by which the propriety and utility of the petition had been enforced. Many specious objections had been and would be urged, to divert the minds of the people from the salutary object of their petition, that it was a novelty, a moulding the constitution anew; that, if wise and right in itself, it did not meet the present temper of the kingdom, and being merely the speculation of a few, would only divide the nation in a moment which of all others asked the united aid of every heart and hand; and that it would unnerve the executive power, by weakening the dependence of administration upon the commons, from whom the supplies of government were to be received.—To each of these objections he proposed to answer in their order:

The first, viz. that the object of the people's prayer was an absolute innovation, appeared

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appeared to be a formidable objection; but he trusted that a little attention to the origin and progress of our singular constitution would show the objection to be wholly unfounded, that the evil complained of in the petition was itself the thing abhorrent and strange to the ideas of Englishmen, and that the redress petitioned for was simply a renovation. If this could be clearly shown, it could not fail to reconcile the minds of every one as to their old habitude and right. But as this was a matter of historic evidence, he presumed that he should not affront his audience in giving them a brief abstract of the rise, progress, and discriminating spirit of the English constitution, as no unnecessary information to many, whose situation in life might render so useful a knowledge inaccessible to them. He asserted, that the actuating principle and virtue of the English constitution were derived from, and founded upon, the primæval rights of human nature, upon the sense, conviction, and invariable exercise of these

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rights with our early ancestors, to which their being secreted for ages from the knowledge of the dangerous refinements of more polished European nations had principally contributed.

That passing from the east along the tract of northern Europe, and uncontaminated with the servile maxims of aristocratic and monarchical government, to which the southern regions had long been habituated, they had descended into the rich provinces of the Roman empire, and imported with them, wherever they established themselves, the liberal spirit by which society had till that moment been conducted among them. This spirit consisted in the equality of all, equality of rights, and that in this view, every member of community stood upon the same ground. Whatever distinctions particular exigencies might require, they were distinctions of utility, artificial arrangements for a common good, often abolished when the exigence ceased, but never subversive of the primary, the fundamental right

to

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to property, to liberty, to legislation, to life, in all. Kings were originally but the leaders of their military expeditions; and barons, subordinate chieftains under them, instituted to serve the purposes of the state, dependent for their very existence and authority upon the will of the state, controllable by and accountable to the state, and which the necessities of the state, in it's lengthened struggle for dominion with the natives of the Roman provinces, rendered permanent establishments. The state consisted originally in the assembly of the whole community, in whom resided the supreme power, and in which were combined the military, the legislative, and often the judicial and executive character*. But when the resistance of the

* Under this judicial and executive power of the general assemblies of the nation, Orgetorix, the ambitious chieftain of the Helvetii, suffered death; nor could all the merit of Arminius, the deliverer of Germany, rescue him from the same fate, when he had incurred the jealousy of a free people. Tacitus in his treatise on the manners of our German ancestors, as also Montesquieu, Henault, and

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the natives was utterly subdued, and they were reduced to the condition of villanage or slavery, the necessity of convening the whole community in their military character no longer existed; and the inconvenience of general assemblies rendered it expedient, to provide some other mode of discharging the legislative duties of the state. To the greater chieftains, or barons, a personal attendance was rather an honour than an inconvenience; while the less barons, who with the greater were all originally pares, peers or equals, were permitted to appear in the great assemblies of the nation by their

and all the writers on the maxims and usages of those governments, which they erected out of the ruins of the Roman empire, constantly speak of the legislative, judicial, and even executive power, which was annexed to the general assemblies of the nation, whether appearing in the field, in the camp, or at the palace of the monarch. The regular legislative conventions or parliaments of England, for a series of years, were mixed assemblies of barons and commons without distinction, on the great festivals of Christmas and Easter; and our old statutes join the consent of the whole people with the voice of the lords and the sanction of the monarch.

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representatives or proxies. In the collective assemblies of the whole community is seen the origin of parliament itself; in the latter institution, the first distinction of two orders in parliament, viz. the greater barons or lords, who sate in person, and the representatives of the less barons, who are now the knights or the representatives of counties. In this character parliament continued for many years, till the contests between the greater barons and the monarch, and the advantages of commerce to both, introduced a farther change, a new species of representatives in the great parliament of the nation. The frequent necessities of the monarch invited him to emancipate the villains or slaves on his own royal domain, by incorporating them with certain privileges, to erect them into the character of freemen; from this institution the monarch derived their personal service in his wars, and pecuniary aids from that wealth, which their privileges and the exercise of commerce soon acquired to them. This example, so advan-

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advantageous to the monarch, was followed by the barons, and corporations increased through the whole kingdom. The convenience of receiving from them grants of money procured their summons to parliament by their representatives; the increasing number, wealth, and power of this new order of freemen, taught them their own consequence; and the necessities of the state gained them a full admission to all the rights of legislation in parliament, and set them upon a level with the representatives of the counties. Thus was perfected the form of the English parliament, when to the representatives of the counties were added those of the boroughs or incorporated towns, at present styled the citizens and burgesses. The liberal spirit of Christianity cooperated with the utility of the state, and silently did away the very idea of a villain or slave. Thus, whatever entered into the first idea of a freeman, whatever was of the essence of his rights in the first constitution of the invading nation, was extended to every freeman; and of these rights,

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rights, that of legislation, either in person or by their representative, was a primary and fundamental one. The neighbouring nations had originally the same constitution, the same principles from which the form of English government had it's source; but not availing themselves of the same circumstances, they acquired not the same enlargement, the same security in the representation of the commons at large against the encroachments of power; and they have fallen, as we behold them, from a state of the highest freedom, into an abject dependence on despotic monarchs: an awful example to these kingdoms, and to our nobles, with all their fancied dignity and power, as it is not in human nature to provide a solid bulwark against the continually operating advantages of a crown, unless in the spirit, the freedom, the equal rights of the people*. But what

* In the disuse of the general assemblies, which was unavoidable, these neighbouring and kindred nations provided no sufficient substitute for the authority, which the

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what he wished his audience to collect from the whole review, was this single, this great principle, that legislation, either in person or by representation, is the equal, the common right

the people ceased to exercise, and the power of the state devolved to the monarch and nobles. The natural consequence of which was, that the monarch humbled all to his will. Assemblies continued to be summoned, called the states general, in which the third estate was deemed to represent the people; but it was little, if any thing, more than a deputation from the king's manumitted villains, the representation of a few incorporated cities in the royal domain, and therefore never could acquire any consequence or dignity, never could be of any weight to preserve an equipoise of power. It was ridiculous to look for the majesty of the people in a few special dependents on the crown, and in this ridiculous light the nobles always considered them; they had no weight in the deliberations; if the king and nobles were agreed, the consent or rather submission of the third estate was a thing of course. Not united in a common house with a representative of the minor barons, there was not one circumstance, which could lessen the contempt in which they were held. No danger could induce the nobles to form a union with a body, which they were in the habit of despising; and which, though it was but the image, the meagre shadow of a representation,

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right of all; that it is inherent in the very idea of an English freeman; that it was imported into this island with our early ancestors; that the grant which embraced fellow-

sentation, might however have led to a union with the people at large. In the last struggle for the liberties of Spain against Charles V, the third estate with the cities it represented made a gallant stand; but the nobles disdaining to confederate with them, the issue was equally fatal to the nobles and to the people. To this contempt in which the third estate was held by the nobility is in like manner to be ascribed the downfal of the Gallic liberties; and indeed to this source, the antipathy of the nobility throughout all Europe to the people, the scorn in which they were held, a circumstance so contrary to the original features of all the present European nations. This island must be excepted: the spirit of our nobility has worn a softer and milder aspect, the power and consequence of the people has preserved to Englishmen the character of fellow-citizens. But if through any progressive abuse the third estate in parliament should cease to be a true representation of the people, should degenerate into a representation of the nobles or the crown, or both conjointly, the character of the people will become debased, they will sink into a stupid indifference, a fatal separation will take place between them and the nobles; and unsupported by their solid power, the monarch

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low-men as freemen, communicated this right; and that, as all are now free, it is communicated to all. The inequalities in this common right which have taken place, and which the petition aims to redress, have been created by inattention, by accident, by

narch will swallow up all, the nobles will become, as with our neighbours, the base retainers of the monarch, the pageants to set off the lustre of the crown. This moment had made a much nearer approach than many seem to be aware of; the late administration have had a language, a manner, and conduct, which had been unknown since the Revolution. They felt their power, and they seemed disposed to use it, and very slender were the threads on which at that period the liberties of this nation hung. It is a too probable truth, that their incapacity, and the foreign ruin in which this incapacity involved us, has been our domestic salvation. To recover the constitution, to do away our future fears, and put it out of the power of wickedness itself to effect our internal ruin, is the object of the petition, in which the nobility have a double interest, their interest as men, and the interest of their independent consequence in the state. It is a partial and narrow policy, which indisposes many of our more virtuous nobility to a constitutional restoration of the commons' house, and of which, if their opposition should unhappily be successful, they will bitterly, though too late, repent.

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abuse, but do not issue from the spirit or regular usage of the constitution, and have greatly risen to their present dangerous height, against the very intention of the constitution, from those changes which could not possibly have been foreseen. It was the convenience of the monarch, which first erected slaves into corporations of freemen, and summoned them to parliament. Hence arose to the crown that dangerous prerogative, which was too long permitted, of summoning representatives to parliament from whatever place it pleased. This was one source of unequal representation *,

* This was the source, from which in the neighbouring kingdoms the very defective representation of the commons arose, as has already been observed. The emancipation of the villains, and admitting them to the rank of freemen, was no novelty with our German ancestors. In the countries from which they emigrated, a liberal slavery had been in use among them, and they were accustomed to admit into their armies such of their slaves as recommended themselves to their confidence. The committing arms into the hands of a slave rendered him a freeman.

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which the wisdom of parliament has indeed guarded against in future, but too late to prevent the evil consequences. When it intercepted the farther exercise of this prerogative of the crown, it ought to have rectified the abuses, which the prerogative had already established. Similar inequalities have taken place from the creating of corporations by the barons on their separate estates, which through their influence obtaining a summons to parliament, the absolute property of these boroughs has been conveyed with the estates to their successors. Another and perhaps the most fruitful source hasbeen in the changes and revolutions, which the lapse of time has produced. Great and populous towns have vanished as it were from the face of the land, and have hardly any existence but upon paper; yet the right of representation continues, though the very cause and reason of representation has ceased: while the very same time and fluctuations of commerce have created many more towns of the first rank and consequence

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quence in the kingdom, to which no representation has been extended. Thus, in whatever view we contemplate the spirit and design of our constitution, we see clearly, that the prayer of the petition has nothing of innovation, nothing strange in it, nothing but what the very idea of parliament embraces and intends, nothing but what is essential to, and inherent in, the rights of freemen; and that the greatest abuses in the representation are contrary to the very design of our ancestors themselves, unwise and improvident in many instances as these ancestors have been. It has ever been deemed an excellence in our constitution, that there was resident in it the power and virtue of recurring to it's original principles, whenever it shall be found to have dangerously degenerated from them; and if a government mean well, it would be absolute suicide in it not to rectify abuses, which mere accident, time, or corruption has introduced, and which, if not redressed, threaten

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to destroy all it's character, and all it's well-being."

Having removed the imputation of novelty in the redress, for which the petition prays, Mr. Walker next adverted to the second objection, " that, however wise and right in " itself, it did not meet the present temper of " the kingdom, but would only disturb, di- " vide, and distract the nation, in a moment " which required all it's union." But let these men, whoever or of whatever rank they be, withdraw each their individual opposition, and the objection falls to the ground. Allowing the right, the wisdom, and utility of the petition; they themselves should not swell the number of it's opponents; an objection, confessed to be founded in mere obstinacy and perverseness, in a refusal of public good, should not lie at their door; every fellow subject, who will not accord with the petition, should meet the friends of it on the ground of constitutional right, of national utility; and when all manly and virtuous reply

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reply fails them, it is a crime of the highest form not to be a friend, not to take a decided part in the cause of truth and right. It is not a rash and passionate censure to affirm, that with a silent acquiescence in the right and utility of the petition, no good motive is at the bottom of that mind, which still continues to object to it, and throws any difficulty in the way of it's success. The question between the friends and the enemies of the petition is reduced to a short issue. It's friends plead the justice, the wisdom, the expedience of the measure, the horrid experience of past mischiefs, the well-founded apprehension of growing evil from the same malignant source. Let the enemies of the petition stand forth in the face of their country, and show that it is not just, not wise, not expedient; that the abuses complained of have not been disgraceful and ruinous, and have not an ugly aspect on the future; let them show this, or, continuing in a silent and sullen opposition, let them abide the consequence; the imputation of having renounced

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in this instance all the obligations of a citizen, of a well-wisher to the public good. It is with men of this complexion, that the true difficulty rests; they are the authors of the opposition, with them lies all the crime of disunion; but whether timidity, a spirit of no English hue, or views which are not fit to be owned, create and support their disaffection, it becomes them to know, that an Englishman cannot respect an opposition so founded; that the timid, the illiberal, and the selfish, are the enemies whom he expects to meet with in the field of all his virtuous contests.

But it is lastly urged, "that the reform, if "it should be adopted, will unnerve the exe- "cutive power, by undoing that influence, "that ascendency of administration over the "house of commons, which is pleaded to be "necessary to government." But if the plea fail, the reform ought not to be resisted on this ground. This is the last refuge of the enemies to a parliamentary reform, and in the supposed strength of it I verily believe

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lieve many are really deceived. But a definition of terms, particularly of the government, to which such an unconstitutional influence is necessary, may contribute to undeceive them. It is undoubtedly necessary to a government, which respects not the popular opinion; but this is not, or ought not to be, the government of England; and, if it be, is the very strongest reason, why an influence of so cursed a nature should be utterly extirpated. Some ambiguous and covert phrases require to be turned into plain English, in order clearly to understand them. In plain English, then, a decided majority of the minister in the house means, that it should be the minister's house, not the house of commons of England; and whether this be an honest, virtuous, and salutary English maxim, I think may be left to the effrontery of your boldest enemy to say. What! a majority, prepared, disposed to carry through the minister's measures! sworn, bound, and passive to his will, without regard to the good pleasure of the peo-

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ple, by whom, and for whom, they are, or ought to be! No! the constitution means the minister no such majority, it abhors it, and no utility of a wise and virtuous government requires it. No majority in the very idea of that house is intended, but what the wisdom, honesty, and patriotism of the minister's conduct deserves and ever will procure to him. Let a minister stand forth and answer for this to parliament and to the people, and every one may answer with his life for a triumphant majority, without the intervention of troublesome, illiberal, and dirty intrigues. Let any one for a moment conceive a parliament in factious opposition to such a minister, and, almighty as it may presume itself to be, he will soon perceive, that there is an almighty power, which will control and convert it to the public good. Standing in the midway between the crown and the people, and disowned, unsupported by either, parliament would feel the awe of that constitutional spirit, which is the secret stay and security, on which the fabric of our

government

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government rests, which has, and I trust will save it in the most perilous encounters. This is not idle theory; it was verified by the conduct of the greatest and honestest minister, that England ever knew.—Called to the helm by the dangers and necessities of the state, he had no interest at court or in parliament, but with a virtuous magnanimity he courted neither, he left it to his conduct to justify himself to both. The honest spirit of his prince relaxed from it's prejudices, but parliament, turned out of it's habit and course, never was cordial to him, yet it dared not to check him in his career of glory and of usefulness. This saved the minister a world of trouble, and it did his country a world of good. But as this pleaded necessity of ministerial influence vitiates parliament, and turns it into a direction contrary to it's genius, so it is of the most dangerous tendency in another view, which has never, I believe, been adverted to. The power in the house of commons of impeaching a bad minister, whose crimes no other

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other form of justice can reach, has ever been remarked as one of the happiest guards of our constitution. But this power is a mere nullity in the present management and habit of parliament. Master of parliament, what has the minister to fear? will the servant raise his voice against his bountiful lord? will the injured and insulted people find a protector, an avenger, in the confederate of the minister's crimes? Nor will a change of administration revive the avenging genius of the constitution. Ministers standing in the same predicament, and having the same to fear for themselves, will have a tender sympathy for each other; nor will a parliament still disposed to corruption, throw discredit on the trade by the punishment of it's past corrupters.

He concluded with avowing better hopes of the future prosperity of his country, than some of it's wisest and best friends dared to flatter themselves with. But nothing assuredly could effect this, unless a renewal of the constitution. A languid and sickly frame, either

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either in the individual or politic body, could promise no vigorous and well prosecuted exertions. That ruin, from the brink of which it was so frightful to look down, had issued from the abuses, which the petition wished to rectify. And as England previous to the existence of her colonies had risen to her height of greatness from the inexhausted resources of her free and manly government, she might from the same actuating spirit repossess and maintain her rank among nations. All depended upon the virtue of the people.

This speech excited the strongest marks of approbation from the meeting. Among those who expressed themselves most particularly gratified was that illustrious patriot the late sir George Saville; and the present first lord of the treasury declared, that he had outrivalled Cicero himself; and though he had intended to have delivered his sentiments on the occasion, he would not weaken the effect of such a speech by any observations of his own. The present duke of Norfolk also

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also thanked him in the name of the meeting. So favourable an introduction to the notice of the great, accompanied by such flattering testimonies of their approbation, might have endangered the humility of a poor minister of the Gospel, and excited expectations incompatible with the purity of his motives. If private advantage had been the actuating principle of his conduct, a field was now open to him, which he might have cultivated with success, and where his talents could scarcely have failed of reaping a reward: but he was instigated by other motives than those of personal emolument: at a time which he thought required the exertions of every virtuous citizen, he stepped forward to discharge his duty to his country; and, satisfied with this, he returned to the private walk of his profession, without any exertion to prolong his acquaintance with the great, though without retiring from their proffered civilities.

Subsequent meetings both of the town and county were held for the purpose of furthering

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furthering this object; and in all of these his services were exerted with great advantage to the cause he espoused. In the year 1785 another general meeting of the county was summoned, where, in support of the petition which he drew up for the occasion, he delivered one of the most animated and energetic defences of the measure, that perhaps ever was made, and of which the following is but a very brief abstract.

He began with endeavouring to restore the harmony of the meeting, which had been something endangered by one gentleman indulging the warmth of the moment, and expressing more than he probably intended, and by other gentlemen apprehending too much from even an indirect opposition to a measure, in which their hearts were so honestly concerned. He was persuaded, that they agreed in wishing well to the general object that was in view, though they might differ in smaller matters, which, whether right or wrong, would not in all probability be even contemplated by the Legislature,

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gislature, and therefore, however objects of private speculation, could not wisely be introduced into public debate. But with respect to the general question, he thought he could clearly collect, that it met all their minds; that the broad face of wisdom, of justice, and of utility, which it presented, enforced approbation or submission from all. It seemed to be conceded by all, that the representative body was not what it ought to be, and that the national security, which a true representation promises, must be abandoned to despair, if it's constitutional character were not recovered, if some salutary reform were not effected in this exceedingly degenerate and corrupted body. There was a shamefacedness in the opponents of a parliamentary reform, a shrinking from the question, which induced a suspicion, that their voice was at variance with their heart, or a secret conviction, that no arguments of truth, of right, of fitness, or of wisdom, could be adduced to give a colour to their opposition. The reform, which the petition prayed

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prayed for, was constitutional, it was wise, it was necessary. In vindicating it's claim to a constitutional right, he repeated in a concise manner that historic view of our constitution, which he had stated at large to the county when it was last assembled at Mansfield. To this he added, that the same clear truth was to be inferred from the very theory of our constitution, as it was conceived by every one, by foreigners as well as natives. No one ever expressed his idea of it in other terms, than that of a coalescence of three distinct estates for a common good. The only three civil orders of men, which the idea or experience of government can give birth to, and which separately or unitedly stamps a character on every government that man has known, were all adopted by the excellent constitution of these kingdoms, that what might not safely be intrusted to one or two of the three, might be secured by the union of all, that they might form a well-balanced depository of that Supreme Power, which every government

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vernment must somewhere repose. This, whether in the same terms or no, is the idea which has ever been entertained of the British government, which every writer on the subject has expressed; it is the common notion of us all, for which we might equally appeal to the enemies as to the friends of the petition. But the truth and essence of this fine idea of the British government was gone, if one of these three independent orders of the state were utterly swallowed up by one or both of the remaining two. There ought to be a common sense, a decent consistency in our notions, whatever they be; yet men and Britons can so far abandon all sense and meaning, as to talk with rapture of the unrivalled form of their government, yet acknowledge as an incontested fact, that one of the three orders, the independency of which enters into the very theory of this government, is, as to all it's efficacy and power, created and controlled by the other two. Either maintain, that the government of these kingdoms is wisely reduced from three orders

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ders to two, or reassert the independence of that house of commons, which was meant to originate from us, and to be actuated by our soul. In the true spirit and virtue of our constitution, we were designed to be freemen; abandoned to the will of the other two orders of the state, we must descend with the other nations of the Earth to the condition of slaves; for it is not in human wisdom to provide for freedom, when all power is surrendered to those higher ranks of life, whom virtue sooner quits, and who are not formed to sympathize with the degraded mass of the community.

In maintenance of the same constitutional right, he appealed to the constitutional language of these kingdoms. The meaning of established terms, early adopted by, and for ever preserved in the course of any government, exhibited the most decisive proofs of the original spirit and intention of it's constitution. King, Lords, and Commons, meant three separate unmixed political orders, or meant nothing that answered to the ex-

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pressions. These terms never meant, nor will be maintained at this day to mean, that the commons are comprehended in the king, are comprehended in the lords, or are comprehended in the king and lords together. We know the personages designed by king and lords, and do we not know ourselves, under the designation of a term borrowed from our own rank of life? Does the unvaried language of our government for ever instruct us whom the commons in parliament were designed to represent, from whom they were to originate, and for whom specially to act; and shall we submit ourselves to believe, that our proper representation can proceed from the lords, that the commons of England are to be found in the absolute creatures of the king and lords, nominated by their voice, and obedient to their will? If the constitution be changed, and it be fit that it should continue to be changed, let the language be changed also; let not the abused commonalty be insulted with the mockery of names and sounds, which

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which preserve only the painful remembrance of what they have lost, which embitter the sense of their ruined state, by continually holding up the beautiful picture of what they were designed to be, and what even at this moment, unless by their own abandonment, they may recover themselves to. If it must not be, that by our true and proper representatives we are in future to have an equal voice in the legislative body of these kingdoms, let the style as well as the existence of the commons be abandoned; let it be avowed and declared, that the king and lords devise laws, dispose of life and liberty, and give and grant to whatever extent of the public money. This is the plain naked truth: the king and lords do of their own absolute pleasure make, and by their own absolute pleasure govern, a vast majority of the commons' house in parliament, and they who make and rule the majority make and rule the whole. Let then the man, who sets his face against the manly claim of the people's usurped rights, come

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forward, and say that these things are not; or let him not gather himself up in affected anger, when he is told, that; with the confessed knowledge of departed rights, he is willing to abandon them to the destroyer, and is active only in the cause of the destroyer; in resisting the well meant efforts of those, who, in the revival of the true spirit of the constitution, still hope to save their falling country. No! They see not the infamy and ruin of their own conduct; and because names and forms are still suffered to remain, they believe, that the glorious constitution of their ancestors still exists in all it's wise and virtuous provision for the public good. These names and these forms ought to be documents and proofs to them, that a great and dangerous corruption has taken place; they ought even to the commonest mind to hold up a most alarming truth. He observed it to be almost unworthy of children to be amused and soothed with the illusion of a mere name or form, when the reality was gone; it would not be a greater

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a greater folly to look for the man in his grave, because with his former name he was committed thereto. But he added as a serious fact, that the more liberal is any government, the more terrible are the consequences of it's corruption, and that tyranny never appears in so awful a form, as when it comes in the shape and semblance of a once free constitution. A naked and undisguised despotism must observe some terms with human nature, but, under the venerable sanction of liberty, it abandons itself to every caprice and excess. Thus the form of the Roman republic was preserved by the Roman emperors, but the corruption of it under this form degenerated into the most horrid and wanton tyranny, that man ever submitted to.

From this evidence of a constitutional spirit in the reform, Mr. Walker passed to the expediency and necessity of it. It were absurd to look for any of the wise and salutary effects of a constitution, unless from the reality of those very provisions, which con-

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stituted all that was wise and salutary in it's plan. The wisdom and health of our constitution was not to be found in the existence of a king, not in that of lords, not in that of commons singly and separately, but in the well-tempered mixture of the regal, the aristocratic, and the popular power. But if one of these essential parts have passed into a mere nullity, the ground of dependence is vanished, and with it all the hope and possibility of the singular blessings, which so singular a constitution promised. It was not from any supernatural wisdom in our rude and unlettered ancestors, that a form of government originated, which mocked all the wisdom and policy of the Greeks and Romans. It flowed from their very simplicity, from their knowing no essential distinction of man from man, from an honest adherence to this single principle, an equality of rights in all whom they acknowledged as freemen, an equal claim of law, of liberty, of property, and life.—And he observed as a general rule, that one honest

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nest principle is worth all the mysterious policy and cunning of the world, and will ever conduct to more true wisdom and solid good. In the separation of a king and lords they intended a provision for public utility, but in the representatives of themselves, in the reserving to this representative body a controlling power in all the deliberations of the sovereign legislature, they contemplated the essence and the security of what was dear to themselves. What has preserved and transmitted this blessing to us can alone preserve and transmit it to our posterity. If the commons of England are not truly and honestly represented, the third estate is a mere name, and the popular liberty is the mere sufferance of the day; it rests not, as with our manly ancestors, on the solid security of holding it in our hands. If evil had not already originated from this degeneracy of our original constitution, yet, when the security is gone, evil must infallibly ensue; and on the mere ground of prevention, it would at any moment be wise and worthy

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of the people, to recover the government to that state, for which the petition prays.

But to the plea of expediency is added the pressing one of necessity. The nation is bowing under the heaviest of ills, that a people can be conceived to exist under, and all proceeding from the very corruption of the representative body, which the petition deplores. These have been amply and pathetically stated by Major Cartwright, and therefore need not be again repeated. But there is nothing wonderful in these evils; the wonder is, that they have not sooner made their appearance. When the proper guardian is removed from his trust, it were folly to look for it's preservation. If the crown united with it's confederate lords be represented by a great majority in the pretended house of commons, is it any wonder, that ministerial folly and wickedness should drive the nation to the pit? They who command all are not your agents, they receive no commission from you, they laugh at the idea of being accountable to you. They

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They know their proper master, and their master's pleasure they will do. Sure of being supported by the whole legislative body, the minister is emboldened to every attempt; flagitiousness springs out of security. But unless the people bow their necks to this abuse, to meet in stupid silence whatever of remaining ruin another profligate administration may bring upon them; no other path is left for them, than what the petition points out: a manly reassertion of their constitutional rights, and the giving motion and efficacy to those means, which may render the house of commons again the true representative and the faithful guardian of the nation. It is big with horrour but to think of the precarious ground, on which at every moment the existence of a free people rests. Divide the representative body into three parts; the people have not the appointment of so much as one of these parts. If they who create the other two should please to combine, and the growing prostitution of the higher ranks gives too much

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much credibility to such a supposition, one blow might decide our fate, and we might sink in an instant into servitude and oppression. We have no constitutional protector existing, which could resist and avert the awful ruin. What a prospect does the whole history of a late administration present! With what force does it bring home to the most stupid and obstinate the necessity of an instant reform! In the present moment a reform may save; another experiment like to what has past will place salvation out of the reach of all reform.

He concluded with some observations on the Septennial Act. He asserted it to be the mere creature of meditated corruption, and that from the moment of it's violent birth, corruption has walked over the face of this country like a fiend of Hell. Truth and fact scorn the insulting plea of necessity, of a tender regard to the protestant religion, to the house of Hanover. Had the battles of Preston and Sheriff Muir not been fought before this daring power was usurped, the framers

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framers of the Septennial Act might have been believed to have acted from a patriot motive. But when the national fears were blown over, when the friends of Rome and the Pretender were humbled to the dust, only then, in the moment of triumphant security, was this monster of corruption brought forth. The continuance of Septennial Parliaments to this day is a demonstration of the principle, from which they proceeded.—Surely the time has long ceased, since the Pope and James's son have been the objects of dread. If parliament were actually in the people's nomination, this act would alone suffice to vitiate parliament, and estrange it from the people. In such a length of time they forget their constituents, think themselves independent, become self-willed, are worth a purchase which no ordinary form of virtue can resist, and in the hope and confidence of this the minister can dare to apply the national purse to their seducement. These are not dreams and speculations, they are the mere history of the progress

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progress of the Septennial Act; and while that continues, it is almost against human nature to secure a virtuous representation;—while the horrour of such a precedent, the thought that the usurpation of seven years may sanctify the usurpation of life, or of inheritance, is enough to make every honest man tremble. On every view, therefore, he gave his full assent to the petition.

About the year 1787, a variety of circumstances concurred, to favour an application to the legislature for a repeal of the corporation and test acts; and very strenuous exertions were made on the part of the whole dissenting interest of the kingdom, to effect a liberation from the pains and disabilities of those disgraceful and vexatious statutes. As this was a subject in which Mr. Walker felt himself more immediately interested, he exerted himself, as well on the ground of individual suffering as of abstract principle, with great zeal and assiduity. The idea of this application originated at a meeting of deputies from the different congregations

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gregations in London and it's vicinity, in January 1787, in consequence of which a motion was made without success, though supported with extraordinary ability by Mr. Beaufoy, Mr. Fox, and others. On this occasion it was objected, that the application was made by the dissenters of the metropolis only, without the cooperation of their brethren in the country, who were stated to be generally indifferent to the success of the measure. To obviate this, and at the same time to give additional weight and respectability to their application, the London committee thought proper to seek the support of their friends in the country; in which they met with great success. But it was not till the plan of union proposed by the Birmingham committee in October 1789 was generally adopted, that they felt themselves entitled to declare, that they acted in the name and by the authority of the whole body of dissenters throughout the kingdom. The object of this plan was to form a well connected union of the dissenters throughout

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out England, by a chain of intercourse and communion, advancing in order through successive gradations to a representation of the whole body in a general or national meeting at London. The adoption of this was strongly enforced by Mr. Walker, both in his individual capacity, and as chairman of the associated dissenters of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and part of Yorkshire. For this purpose, he addressed a letter to a general meeting at Leicester in December 1789, which, on account of the able manner in which it enforced the necessity of the proposed union, was afterward printed by different committees, generally circulated through the kingdom, and deemed to have contributed in no small degree to the adoption of that regularly organized system of action, which the plan contemplated. The grounds on which he claimed this general assent, were the following; "because in no "other way could that union, so essential "in a common cause, be so effectually pro-"moted.—That such an extended inter-

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" course and communion of man with man
" tended to enlarge the ideas of the human
" mind, correct it's crude conceptions, and
" promote that zeal, which is according to
" wisdom, and without which even the best
" of causes is sure to languish—that by a
" chain of intercourse thus widening more
" and more the sentiments of individuals
" were communicated to all, and received
" that correction, and ultimately all that
" perfection, which could possibly be ex-
" pected. By this means the dissenters
" would be sure to appear in all their pro-
" ceedings with a good sense, a collected
" and guarded wisdom, which could not be
" expected from individual and independent
" movements; at the same time that, by
" progressively collecting the wisdom of the
" whole body, it would prevent the sallies
" of intemperate zeal, and produce that
" manly, conscientious and dignified firm-
" ness, which would do honour to the cause
" and to the actors, and present them in
" a respectable view to the legislature and to
" the

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" the whole community. That to excite the
" national attention to objects of the highest
" importance requires exertions in the first
" outset, which are hardly to be repeated,
" and from the repetition of which the most
" sanguine patriot shrinks back with diffi-
" dence. Failing therefore at success in the
" first attempt, and no provision being made
" for preserving the national attention when
" excited, and rendering it's continued efforts
" easy and practicable, a languor and de-
" spair succeeds, and the whole is committed
" to oblivion. But by the plan proposed a
" permanent council of the dissenters of the
" whole kingdom would be established,
" which without any extraordinary exer-
" tions, and yet with the efficiency of the
" whole body, would prosecute the great
" object that they had in view; that to re-
" ject therefore an arrangement, the object
" of which was to give a being and activity
" to this perseverance, so necessary to en-
" sure success, would be a folly approaching
" almost to suicide. That it is to the not at-

" tending

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" tending to the character of human nature,
" and to the delicate springs of all great
" events, that the failure of the most im-
" portant designs is often to be attributed.
" Speculation alone is a feeble instrument,
" if it be not aided by action, and man
" must be managed as man, or he will not
" be found to act in a manner worthy of
" himself—that such a union of dissenters
" of such different religious principles, on
" the common ground of religious liberty
" and civil rights, would be in itself a great
" attainment, which this island had never
" known, which would do the highest ho-
" nour to the liberality of the present day,
" and the happy consequences of which no
" one could presume to calculate. If the
" union here recommended had earlier ob-
" tained among the dissenters, if they had
" been earlier stimulated in the cause of
" their just rights, it is probable, that the
" redress of their grievances had ere this
" been accomplished. No reason can be

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" suggested, why such a mode should not be
" permanently adopted. It presents nothing
" which ought to give alarm, but is rather
" happily calculated in it's consequences to
" prevent all rude, undisciplined, and violent
" proceedings; to collect in the most decent
" and dignified form the sense of the whole
" body of the dissenters; and to present it
" in this form to the legislature of the coun-
" try: while it meditates nothing but the
" religious interests, that are common to all
" dissenters of every name and faith; those
" interests, which are not committed to the
" civil magistrate, which are deposited with
" themselves, which interfere with no civil
" duty, and which they would preserve un-
" mixed with any civil concern, both as a
" right inherent in themselves, and as a duty
" which they owe to the civil government
" of their country. The example of the
" Quakers, of whose union this proposed
" plan is almost an exact counterpart, is a
" complete answer to every objection, that
" can

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"can be made to this mode of consolidating "the community of dissenters throughout "the kingdom."

In consequence of the adoption of this plan, and of the favourable issue of Mr. Beaufoy's motion in May 1789, when success appeared to have been nearly within their reach, the majority against them being only twenty-four, the dissenters were encouraged to more vigorous exertions. In the spirit of elation which these augmented hopes produced, general meetings were held, committees formed, and resolutions entered into, expressing in firm but moderate language a sense of the hardships to which they were subjected, the grounds on which they claimed the restoration of their rights, and their determination to persevere, until they had obtained that redress, which both justice and policy dictated. The following resolutions, drawn up by Mr. Walker, and unanimously approved at a meeting of deputies from the counties of Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln, Warwick, Salop, Stafford,

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Leicester, Rutland and Yorkshire, are declaratory of the principles avowed at their most respectable meetings, and of the grounds on which they defended their claims.

"*Resolutions:*

"1. That it is not the province of the civil magistrate to direct, or to interfere with the religious opinions or practices of any members of the state, provided their conduct be not injurious to others.

"2. That all the subjects of the state, conducting themselves in an equally peaceable manner, are equally entitled, not only to protection in the possession of their civil rights, but also to any civil honours, or emoluments, which are accessible to other subjects, without any regard to their religious opinions or practices.

"3. Desiring nothing for ourselves but the same equal and liberal treatment, to which we think all other persons in a similar situation are equally entitled, it is our earnest wish, that an equal participation in all civil privileges may be obtained for dissenters of every

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every description, to whom nothing can be objected, beside their religious opinions or practices, and who can give that security for their civil allegiance, which the state ought to require.

" 4. That the protestant dissenters of this country have always had reason to complain of unjust treatment, in being disqualified to hold offices of civil trust or power, though their behaviour has ever been peaceable and loyal, and though they can even boast peculiar merit, as friends to the present government.

" 5. That it becomes dissenters, as men feeling their own disgraceful situation, and the opprobrium which this reflects upon their country, to adopt every constitutional method of procuring the redress of their grievances, and thus retrieve the honour of the nation.

" 6. As one principal ground of our abhorrence of the test laws is the prostitution of religion to interested and secular views, and as these laws therefore ought to be

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equally abhorred by every friend of pure religion, we invite every conscientious fellow-subject of the established church to concur with us, assuring them, that in this proceeding we sympathize with them, as we wish them to sympathize with us, and each contribute to do away this reproach and profanation of our common religion. But if it should be deemed more honourable to themselves to act apart from us, we invite them as a separate body to come forward, and in some decided manner bear their testimony to a cause, which does equal honour to both.

"7. That with the same decided tone, with which we assert our rights as men and christians, and protest against all interference of the magistrate in the proper cause of religion, we repel with scorn the imputation of all meaner and baser views. We have no latent ambition under the mask of religion. We are as superior to hypocrisy, as we are to fear. We aspire not to one emolument or honour of the church. In our civil capacity we vow as pure a loyalty, as generous

generous and ardent an affection, as liberal exertions, and as well informed and well principled an attachment to the constitution of our country, as its most favoured and honoured subject can pretend to.—Our reverence of Britain, her government and laws, is only in subordination to our reverence of God and of human nature.

"8. That though the particular grievance of the corporation and test acts has been the means of convening us, as part of the body of dissenters, we think it our duty, to use our utmost endeavours to procure the repeal of all penal statutes in matters of religion, as this is clearly comprehended within our just rights; and are persuaded, that in this we meditate nothing new, as religious liberty ever will and must be defective, while one such penal law is suffered to exist.

"9. That in contending for our civil rights, we mean nothing hostile to the religious principles of the church of England, or to

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any religious principles whatever, holding it as a maxim, that nothing of this nature is within the province of the civil magistrate: we therefore will not be considered as responsible for whatever any individual, belonging to any part of the body of dissenters, may publish for or against any religious tenets; we consider it as every man's right to do whatever under the influence of a love of truth he may think proper in that respect; but publications, not expressly authorized by any body of men, should not be imputed to that body.

"10. That a permanent mode of collecting the sense and uniting the efforts of the whole body of dissenters of every denomination, so that they may have their representatives to meet in London or elsewhere, and make proper application to the legislature as circumstances may require, appears to be a measure well calculated to promote the desirable end above mentioned.

"SAMUEL SHORE, Jun. Chairman."

At

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At the request of the committee of the midland district formed at the above meeting of deputies, Mr. Walker undertook, in an appeal to the nation, published under the title of the *Dissenter's Plea*, to defend more at large the claims of the dissenters, and to repel the arguments, that had been opposed to them. Of the manner in which he executed the task assigned to him, it would be superfluous here to speak, after the commendations which have been passed upon it by two individuals so capable of appreciating its merit as the late Mr. Fox, and Mr. Gilbert Wakefield, who have both declared their opinion of its superior excellence, in pronouncing it to be the best pamphlet published on a subject, which had exercised the pens of the ablest writers of the day. As the advocate on this occasion of the dissenters, he did not merely confine himself to those arguments, which had a reference to the circumstances of the times, or that applied peculiarly to the nature of the subject immediately in view; but in deducing them from

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from the original principles of human nature, and the constitution of civil society, he has established them on a broader and firmer foundation, and has exposed the futility and sophistry of every plea, that can be urged by those, who, as the advocates of a test, would sacrifice to the notions of speculative utility the unalterable laws of justice, and subject the most sacred acts of devotion to the profanation of interested and worldly views.

It might have been expected, that this and other treatises of a similar kind, which brought forward into such full view the merits of their cause, would have so far removed the prejudices of the public, that the issue of another trial would have crowned their exertions with success. But the bigoted and illiberal spirit, which has ever disgraced the — — — opposed itself to the justice of their claims. When some in the minority, on the division in May 1789, expressed their satisfaction and their hopes, they were authoritatively told, that *never* again

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again would so near an approach be permitted: a prediction which, fatally for the dissenters, was fulfilled on the division that followed Mr. Fox's motion on the second of March 1791, when it was found, that this spirit had so far operated upon the temper of the house, as to increase the majority against them from 20 to 189, the numbers being 294 to 105. Thus, after three strenuous efforts, terminated all hopes of obtaining from the liberality or justice of the British government the abolition of laws, which for more than a century have debased the character of protestant dissenters, by cutting them off from the common privileges of citizenship, and stigmatizing them as outcasts of society.

As the chairman of the associated dissenters, Mr. Walker was requested by several ministers to prepare an address to Dr. Priestley, expressive of their common concern at the horrid outrages, which he had lately experienced from an ignorant and misguided multitude, whom the malice of bigotry and the ran-

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cour of party had stimulated to those violent proceedings, that have affixed an indelible disgrace upon the national character. In compliance with this he composed the following address, which was afterward signed by a very respectable number of ministers of the different denominations.

" *Address:*

" To the Rev. Dr. PRIESTLEY.

" Sir,

" We the dissenting ministers of Notting-
" hamshire and Derbyshire, of the presbyte-
" rian, independent, and baptist persuasions,
" associated as brethren and interested in the
" common cause of religious liberty, present
" our very respectful and affectionate condo-
" lence for the outrages to which you have
" been subject. Though many of us differ
" from you in matters of religious faith, we
" trust that we have better learnt the spirit
" of our excellent religion, than not to es-
" teem in you that character of piety and
" virtue, which is the best fruit of every
" faith, and that ardour for truth and manly

" inquiry,

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" inquiry, which Christianity invites, and
" which no form of Christianity ought to
" shrink from; as well as to admire those
" eminent abilities, and that unwearied per-
" severance, which give activity to the vir-
" tues of your heart, and to which in almost
" every walk of science your country and
" the world have been so much indebted.

" That such virtues and such abilities
" should invite persecution, is a melancholy
" proof, that neither philosophy nor Chris-
" tianity have yet taught their most digni-
" fied and amiable lessons to our country.
" But though man will feel, and your enemies
" have attacked you in that way wherein
" you feel perhaps most sensibly, yet we re-
" joice to find in you that decent magna-
" nimity, that Christian bearing, which
" raises you superior to suffering; and that
" a regard to God, to truth, and to another
" world, have even from the bosom of af-
" fliction enabled you to extract a generous
" consolation. Whether in your religious
" inquiries you have erred or no, we firmly
" believe,

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" believe, that truth and the best interests of
" mankind have been the object of your
" constant regard; and we trust, that that
" God, who loves an honest and well-mean-
" ing heart, will dispense to you such pro-
" tection, as to his wisdom may seem most
" fit. To his benevolent and fatherly pro-
" tection we devoutly recommend you
" through the remainder of your life; pray-
" ing, that you may be long preserved, that
" you may survive the hatred of your un-
" grateful country, and that you may repay
" her cruel injuries by adding, as you have
" hitherto done, to her treasure of science,
" of virtue and of piety.

" This tribute of our esteem and sympa-
" thy for you, sir, we entreat you to receive
" with that regard, which we know the pu-
" rity of it deserves; and though not re-
" commended by the rank of life we hold,
" we trust that you, a philosopher and a
" Christian, will think it not undeserving of
" a place among the very respectable testi-
" monies of esteem and condolence, which

" both

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" both at home and abroad your merits and
" your sufferings have invited.

" From you, sir, we turn, respectable as
" you are, and embrace the present occasion
" of appealing in a short address to our
" country, which has discovered so hostile a
" spirit to our whole dissenting body. We
" cannot affect to be ignorant of it, and we
" mean to complain of it with that plain-
" ness and freedom, which becomes us as
" men, as Britons, and as Christians. In-
" stead of concealed or open malignity, we
" do assert our claim to public good-will, as
" faithful and virtuous citizens. In times of
" danger, with our lives and fortunes we
" have vindicated the rights of our country,
" we have ministered to her most valuable
" interests, we have been the foremost in her
" ranks, nor has our fidelity or affection
" been marked with one public stain; and
" in times of security, by an obedience to
" the laws, and by an active industry, we
" have largely contributed to her prosperity.
" Such has ever been our character as citi-
" zens,

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" zens, nor can one public crime be proved
" upon us; unless it be a crime to differ in
" religion, to choose our religion from the
" best judgment of our own minds. Strange
" that in this enlightened day, and in this
" protestant land, that should be deemed a
" crime, which even popery has learnt to
" excuse; which is of the very essence of a
" protestant's character; which the nature
" of religion requires; which the spirit of
" the Gospel enjoins; which in every view
" is one of those unalienable rights, that man
" never can abandon; which cannot be the
" object of political control or regulation,
" as it respects not man but God, and chal-
" lenges all, the governors and the govern-
" ed, as equal subjects. But though we as-
" sert this right as not amenable to human
" legislation, we plead that it is perfectly
" innocent; we molest not the freedom of
" any one, we resist not even the things
" which we can never approve; we submit
" where conscience is not wounded, where
" proper religion is not profaned; and

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" though assuredly wishing the progress of
" truth and piety and virtue, we meditate
" not the reformation of errour, nor the cor-
" rection of evil, nor the very interests of
" christianity, but by appealing to the un-
" derstanding of men, and by a dependance
" on the concurring agency of God.

" Having therefore this claim on the pro-
" tection of all wise and good government,
" we do, in this public appeal, solicit the
" return of that good will from our fellow
" subjects, which we are entitled to, and
" which we are honestly disposed to return.
" In nothing but this general good will can
" we be safe, as has been awfully witnessed in
" the horrid outrages at Birmingham, which
" were immediately directed against the dis-
" senting name, and which never could have
" broken forth, if they had not been thought-
" lessly or wickedly ministered to by propa-
" gating and encouraging throughout the
" whole kingdom an alienation of heart from
" dissenters.

" But even to procure this good-will, we

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" can make no dishonest promises; our re-
" ligion, such as our own minds approve,
" we neither can nor will abandon, nor on
" the ground of this religion can we ever
" cease to protest against every deprivation
" of civil right to which power has subject-
" ed us. If for this a national malediction
" must continue to go forth against us, we
" with our enemies soberly to consider, that
" national maledictions, however weakly
" founded, are those scourges, which folly
" and wickedness may let loose, but which
" neither wisdom nor virtue, nor perhaps
" all the organized powers of government
" can restrain.

" With this reserve of freedom in religion,
" freedom in the rational defence of our re-
" ligion, we are subjects of the British state,
" and have no views, no wishes, but what
" are connected with this character; and
" inasmuch as any honest son of Britain
" ought to promise, we pledge ourselves for
" civil obedience, for peace, for good-fel-
" lowship, and for a generous contest in all

" the

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"the course of industry and virtue. Con-
"fident that we shall not violate this pledge,
"we respectfully solicit protection, trust,
"good-will, and the pleasant sympathy of
"fellow-citizens and fellow-christians. We
"love our country, we prefer it to every
"other under heaven, but with our ideas of
"country are inseparably connected liberty,
"law, and good-fellowship. If these should
"be irrecoverably lost to us in this land,
"every land will be our country, where these
"blessings shall be presented."

Signed in the name of the associated body by the members present,

George Walker,
Samuel Catlow,
Benjamin Naylor,
George Leey,
Stephen Hughes,
Jeremiah Dethick,
William Entroistle,
Rice Jones,
Joseph Fabius Milward,
Joseph Looker,
John Ashwell,
Abijah Hill,
Adcock Shaw,
George Hardstaff,
Robert Thompson,
William Freckleton,
Joseph Frearson,
Francis Walker,
Samuel Cocker,
Thomas Ratcliffe Gawthorne,
Richard Sutton Barrow,
Thomas Astley,
James Pilkington,
Daniel Grenow,

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Joseph Denham,
Samuel Smith,
Thomas Machin,
John Machin,
John Watson,
Thomas Wooley,
Joseph Griffiths,
John Goddard,
John Locker,
Samuel Statham,
John Williams,
William Twells,
Joseph Barrow,
John Davies,
Edward Gibson,
Thomas Hawksley,
Robert Smith,
Jacob Brettell,
John Atenburrow.

About this time he was engaged in a correspondence with Mr. Grey upon the subject of parliamentary reform. On the 6th of May 1793, this gentleman was to move the house of commons upon this subject, on which occasion petitions were to be presented from the metropolis and other districts. As an additional support he was desirous also, that it should be countenanced by the town of Nottingham, for which purpose a petition drawn up by Mr. Walker, and signed by a very respectable proportion of it's population, was presented, but the freedom of it's language occasioned it to be rejected. The passage that excited this repugnance in the house

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house to it's acceptance, was the following: "from various causes, the constitution of "these kingdoms has passed into the grossest "abuses, so as to insult the common sense "of the nation with a name, when the "reality is gone." How the insertion of this clause could justify the rejection it is difficult to discover; no disrespect to the house or insinuation against it's authority was intended to be conveyed, but certainly no respect was ever meant to the very abuse which the petition deprecated. The presenting of the petition was postponed at Mr. Pitt's special request, which was made in order that he might be present to press the rejection of it.

A prevalence of the same evil counsels, which had refused the just claims of the dissenters, and which had rejected every application for the correction of those abuses in the constitution, that were productive of such injurious consequences, was now about to precipitate the nation, contrary to every principle of justice and political expediency,

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into a war without one definite object in view, but originating solely in that invariable hostility, which it had displayed to whatever tended to enlarge the principles of civil liberty. To prepare the public mind for the adoption of this measure, every effort was made use of, by insinuations of disloyalty and revolutionary principles, to direct the passions of the multitude against all who possessed sufficient courage and wisdom to oppose themselves to the mad projects of the minister. To the animosities thus wickedly excited may be attributed the popular excesses at Birmingham. In the town also in which Mr. Walker resided it had engendered such a rancorous spirit of party, that it came to be in a considerable degree unsafe, to express a difference of opinion from those, who were attached to the measures of ministers. No apprehensions of this kind however could deter him from exerting his individual efforts, to arrest if possible the progress of those fatal measures, which were pregnant with so much ruin to the

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the country. While the war was yet only impending, but after the hostile disposition of government had been sufficiently evinced, he endeavoured in a popular address to his fellow-townsmen, signed by twenty-six of it's principal inhabitants, to convince them of the injurious consequences, that it must inevitably occasion to the interests of their manufacturing district, as well as to the general prosperity of the country. The application was not in vain. A petition for peace, composed by Mr. Walker and signed by about 3000 names, was presented to parliament in aid of Mr. Grey's motion, in 1793, a measure which also was adopted at his special request.

The energies France had displayed in defence of her independence, and the unexampled success, which had attended the progress of her arms, had annihilated every expectation of success founded on the supposed imbecility of her disorganized government; yet the blood and treasure of the nation continued to flow with a prodigality unexampled in former wars, and for the prose-

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cution of objects adapted at the mere caprice of the minister to the existing circumstances of the times, and artfully varied for the purpose of protracting the national delusion. The same cause, therefore, that had originally excited the patriotic efforts of Nottingham, continuing to exist, similar petitions were subsequently presented. But the efforts of Mr. Walker were not limited to this object, other important topics continued occasionally to exercise his pen. The great cause of parliamentary reform was not abandoned.—The abolition of the slave-trade, during the time in which it was advocated, occupied a considerable portion of his attention. The attempt of ministers in 1795, to establish a new and undefined law of treason, under the pretence of better securing his majesty's person and government, and for more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies; an attempt which excited the first appearance of national opposition to their hitherto triumphant course; was regarded by him as a measure that aimed

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aimed at one rude blow utterly to subvert all the rights of Englishmen, and introduce a military despotism. On this occasion petitions were sent from the corporation to the different branches of the legislature; but he has so admirably described the nature and tendency of these bills in the following letter to a member of parliament, that no apology can be necessary for it's introduction here.

"Dear sir,

"I most sincerely thank you for your letter, I shall for ever thank you for every "thing that assures me of your continued "friendship and esteem. The gratifications "of friendship and esteem are all the treasure "I possess, and all that I ever hope to possess, "beyond the means of a decent maintenance. "Nor do I repine at this; they are the richest "and the pleasantest food of the mind, while "wealth in a very small degree ministers to "this generous purpose. I have much la-"mented that we should become totally sepa-"rated in political sentiment, for *idem velle*,

"*et*

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" *et idem nolle, ea demum vera amicitia est.*
" But this perfect harmony of sentiment is
" not to be expected in this world. It is a
" great matter to agree in the great principles
" of morals; in benevolence, in affection to
" have one common mind. However, my
" dear sir, the subject of politics is not an un-
" interesting concern. It is founded in mo-
" ral principle, it is a branch of morals, it
" involves the character and the happiness of
" a people, and to think and to act aright in
" it, must for ever be a serious duty of man.
" I am persuaded that you act conscientiously
" in your judgment of the two dreadful bills,
" which are ready to receive the sanction of
" the legislature, and with confidence in your
" virtuous intention, I should not have ob-
" truded my own opinion of these bills upon
" you, if your friendly letter had not invited
" me to a discussion. You will permit me
" therefore to lay my mind before you on
" this subject.

" The convention bill, which has passed
" your house, is so boldly designed and so

" artfully

" artfully framed, as, with an appearance of
" regulating the right of discussing and re-
" monstrating against the acts of ministerial
" or legislative government, to preclude the
" exercise of the right altogether, to render it
" a mere name, a nullity. It is clogged with
" such obstructions in it's first commence-
" ment, as to render it doubtful, whether a
" meeting, however earnestly desired, can be
" obtained at all. The clerk of the peace may
" not be found, and from a variety of pleas
" his official act may not take place. The
" printer of the paper of the district may de-
" cline, may refuse to print the notice sent to
" him; he is his own master, and I see no law
" to force him; he may plead, that his paper is
" preoccupied, he may delay it *ad infinitum*,
" and thus the application for a meeting may
" in it's preparatory steps be again defeated or
" protracted beyond the period of relief. Dis-
" affection to the cause, subserviency to the
" pleasure of government in such low venal
" characters, and dependence on ministerial
" favour, will suggest a thousand evasions. Is

" it

" it fit that liberty should depend on the plea-
" sure and will of such agents as these? Yet
" to such the legislature has humbled it. Sup-
" posing that nothing of this adverse nature
" should take place, yet a fortnight must in-
" tervene, before the meeting can assemble.
" Has the loss of a fortnight been contempla-
" ted in ministerial and legislative movements
" of the highest importance to the public wel-
" fare? How fatal to every remonstrance
" against the present bills would the silence of
" a fortnight have been! But even when as-
" sembled, to what purpose? A dictator, too
" generally, the least enlightened, the least
" virtuous of the kingdom, and, with but few
" exceptions, appointed by the crown, or ra-
" ther by ministerial policy and foresight,
" controls all the freedom of discussion and
" argument, views with his jaundiced eye
" every look and word, arrests by his sove-
" reign mandate the progress of debate, seizes
" the person of every one whom he shall deem
" to offend against temperance and propriety,
" and thus reduces the meeting to a mere
" mockery.

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" mockery. Will any freedom or manliness
" of debate lift up it's head under such re-
" straints? If, resenting the interference of an
" ignorant, insolent and corrupt dictator, the
" imposition of silence should be repelled, and
" resistance to arrest should in any form be
" offered, the meeting is dissolved, and after
" an hour's continuance on the spot, though
" in passive but indignant silence, the whole
" assembly is adjudged to military execution
" and to the punishment of felons. This is the
" regulation of political meetings with a ven-
" geance! No! in all sober construction, it is
" the utter annihilation of them; and assu-
" redly was so designed, though not by you,
" yet by the deep, designing, and profligate
" authors of these laws. The children of this
" world have ever been in their generation
" wiser than the children of light.

" Let me now examine the other, of still
" more awful complexion, the treason and
" sedition bill. I say, of more awful com-
" plexion, for a nation may bear to exist with-
" out being allowed to interfere with, or re-

" monstrate

"monstrate against, it's political government:
"but to have the walks of private life invaded
"by a law of indefinite treason and sedition;
"to have the moral sense of right and wrong
"suppressed in it's effort to speak, by a law,
"to the construction of which no limit can
"be assigned; and banishment and death
"denounced against sentiments, words and
"acts, which have been the habits of English-
"men, which have been sanctioned to them
"by every venerable character of English
"story; is to step at once the barrier of all
"temperate government, and pass into the
"silent and dreary region of pure and proper
"despotism. Law renounces the idea of
"crimes under such definitions as these,
"disaffection to government, tendency to
"excite a dislike to the person and office of
"the king, a dislike to the government as
"established in state and church; by stating
"nothing precisely, they comprehend every
"thing, and leave to a man no security but
"in passive silence and submission. In con-
"sonance with an odious law of that tyrant

"Hen-

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"Hen. VIII, repealed even by his daughter
"Mary, it is now treason to call in question
"the title to the crown. What a whig thinks
"of this title, and what the framers of the
"present bill may think of it, is a very se-
"rious question, which is now put to issue.
"Mr. Burke, the apostle of fashionable po-
"litics, thinks it an absolute, unconditional,
"hereditary right, claiming in defiance of,
"and in contempt of all choice of the peo-
"ple. Whiggism has considered it as a con-
"ditional right, dependant on a settled com-
"pact of rights between the crown and the
"people, unquestionably valid, while this
"compact is adhered to, but null, when this
"compact is violated. A whig may con-
"tinue to think and speak and write as he
"has been used to do; but court lawyers,
"who have calculated the blessings of court
"favour, ascending from a king's counsel
"to a lord chancellor, may construe the
"title to the crown in the unconditional
"sense, and under this new act the old whig
"notion may be found to be treason. The
"very revival in words of Hen. VIII's

"law,

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"law, may with good show of reason plead "the legislative authority for this new con- "struction. One precedent of a decision in "a court of justice may establish the sense "of the law, and this once decided, the vital "principle of the Revolution of 1688 is de- "stroyed, and therewith all it's active ener- "gies, which preserve the sacred treasure of "a limited and well-tempered government. "Mr. Reeves has pronounced the existence "of dissenters to be a national curse, and "that their utter extermination would be a "great blessing. The whole kingdom knows "Mr. Reeves's connections and patrons, "and this bill appears to be the opening and "commencement of the great blessing, the "extermination of dissenters. Dissent is "founded in dislike of the doctrines and go- "vernment of the church, and in dislike and "renunciation on the part of every dissen- "ter of all establishment of religion what- "ever. A dissenter cannot repel any scur- "rilous publication against his religious prin- "ciple and conduct; a dissenting minister "cannot from his pulpit discharge his duty

"to

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"to his people, and to the rising generation,
"in inculcating and defending the principles
"of their common religion; a parent do his
"first and most serious duty to his children;
"nor last of all, in any incidental occurrence
"of social debate, can a dissenter reply to
"an attack upon himself and his religion:
"all these acts, springing out of the very na-
"ture of dissent, and involved in the duty of
"every dissenter, cannot be done without
"tending to excite a dislike to the church as
"established by law, and incorporated in the
"government of these kingdoms. A dis-
"senter may be as innocent as a babe of all
"hostility to the church, he commits her
"with the most pleasant mind to all the sup-
"port she can derive from argument, and
"the protection of the state, but as a dis-
"senter he cannot think, he cannot speak,
"he cannot act, without tending to excite a
"dislike against the doctrines, œconomy, es-
"tablishment, and being of the church. By
"this law his unavoidable duty is adjudged
"to be a crime of the most awful magnitude.

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"This rod may not be immediately brought "forward in all it's terrour; the many may "be spared, not as an act of mercy but of "policy, and the few be selected as the sub- "jects of vengeance; and when a favourable "moment occurs, the operation of this law "may be let loose so as completely to effect "the wish of the virtuous Mr. Reeves, the "blessed deliverance of this kingdom by the "utter extermination of dissenters. The "prosecutions, imprisonments, and execu- "tions necessary to this end, will shock the "humane and good less and less with every "progressive exhibition, and the whole be "conciliated under the plea of it's being a "wholesome though severe discipline for the "general welfare.

"Thus, my dear sir, I have given you my "sentiments of these alarming bills. They "may not be executed to the full extent of "their malignancy; but the bare idea that "they may, that they are capable of this ex- "tent, that they are conceived in the spirit, "and are vested with all the power of ty-

"ranny

" ranny by law, is enough to strike terrour
" into every thinking mind. I behold in
" them all the apparatus of the tyranny of
" imperial Rome, sanctioned by the forms
" of popular and aristocratic orders of the
" state, executed by the medium of a regular
" magistracy, and the whole enforced by a
" military establishment, which enchained
" the whole empire. Such, and in some re-
" spects worse, is the spectacle presented to
" us in these kingdoms. Whither can all
" this tend,—to what is it directed? Assu-
" redly to the same ends, for which the same
" means and instruments have been applied
" in every nation under Heaven, where li-
" berty has been destroyed. The peace of
" the nation is a flimsy and stale pretence.
" It is the peace of it's rulers, the ridding
" them of every restraint, the suppressing
" every murmur, and preventing every effort
" of a virtuous will, which may be opposed
" to their views and measures. It is the lust
" of unlimited power in a few, aided by a
" weak and ill-founded panic of the wealthy,
" who, instead of one generous concession,

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" one yielding to just complaint, one move-
" ment to redress the most serious abuses and
" evils, confederate with the general spoiler,
" that administration which is the deserved
" object of the nation's hatred; and to secure
" themselves against an imaginary evil, pull
" down every fence of protecting law and
" liberty, commit themselves and the nation
" to discretionary rule, and retiring within a
" fortress of power and terrour which they
" have erected, look with unconcern on the
" general ruin which surrounds them. But
" it is urged, that this tyranny is only a tem-
" porary suffering, that it is only to be of
" three years' duration. Delusive insulting
" hope! He who asks it for a day, means it
" for eternity. Where in any age or nation
" did the usurper of power voluntarily and
" virtuously abandon the possession? Either
" the kingdom will tamely submit to the
" usurpation or no. If the former, it would
" be unfit for the re-enjoyment of a tempered
" liberty, it would not deserve it, it would
" perhaps abuse it. The very bearing would
" be an argument for continuing to bear.

" Three

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" Three years of calm and uncomplaining
" sufferance, of that death-like peace which
" tyranny always contemplates, would be a
" fair and comely plea for continuing a sy-
" stem, which had produced so blessed an ef-
" fect. But it may also be, that the kingdom
" will not tamely bear, that indignation and
" resistance of a form and to a degree not to
" be calculated shall be the fruit of this tem-
" porary usurpation. This is the most pro-
" bable consequence, it is and must be in the
" contemplation of those who devised the
" bills; they know that it is in their nature
" to generate abhorrence and resistance, they
" have sown the seed, and they expect the
" fruit; and then the argument will be irre-
" sistible, that the coercive operation of law
" and power provided by these bills is still ne-
" cessary for the repelling of tumult and se-
" ditious resistance. Thus, like all medicines
" administered by state-physicians, whose
" aim is power and the security of power,
" the very remedy generates the disease, for
" which the remedy is pretended to be ap-
" plied. Unwise, oppressive and malignant

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"administration of government produces "discontent in the subject; this discontent "is a plea for a more coercive government, "and on the foundation of it's own crimes "alone, a delegated and limited power "erects at length the horrid structure of "despotism, that which has triumphed over "nations once as free as we were, and "which, unless the better genius of Britain "avert it, will triumph over this nation "also."

The limits which it is requisite to prescribe to this Memoir will prevent a more minute detail of various other measures, in which he was equally engaged, for promoting the welfare of his country, as well as the local interests of the town in which he resided; but the above sketch will suffice, to exhibit the leading principles of his public conduct, as well as the great activity and power of his mind, who, notwithstanding the numerous avocations of his private life, could yet devote so considerable a portion of his time and attention to the service of the public. It has been asserted, that

patriotism

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patriotism is a virtue of so sublime a form, that none but great and exalted minds are capable of conceiving it. To dedicate your time and your talents to the service of the state; to pursue great and extensive plans of public reformation; to encounter the hazard of persecution, of popular odium and outrage, influenced by no motive but a benevolent desire to promote the general improvement of mankind; is indeed too refined and abstracted a principle of action for common minds to apprehend. It is not that low and vulgar attachment to country, which is the effect of mere local prejudices, which acknowledges no higher law than what is derived from the principle of national partiality, and which in it's blind zeal is equally as apt to promote measures that are injurious, as those that are beneficial to the welfare of the community. But the true patriot will act from higher and more enlarged conceptions of the public good. In his endeavours to promote it, he will ever adhere to those principles, on which the

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well-being of society in general depends, which have a reference to the great and permanent interests of man in every age and nation, and on which his progressive advancement in knowledge, virtue, and happiness is founded. In subordination to these he will ever zealously contend in the service of his country; but, opposed to them, even his country will be regarded as of secondary consideration. In this higher acceptation of the term therefore, patriotism is but a branch of that unlimited benevolence, which embraces the interests of humanity at large; which is founded on those universal and immutable obligations, that are paramount to all considerations of self, of friends, of kindred, or of country. This is indeed an exalted principle of action, superior to all the boasted patriotism of the Greeks and Romans, which scarcely the more liberal and enlightened maxims of the present age can altogether adopt, but which is in perfect unison with the all-embracing philanthropy of that religion, which enjoins the practice

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practice of universal charity, which regards the whole human race but as members of one common family, as the children of one universal parent, equally the subjects of his providence and the candidates for his favour.

Such were the maxims upon which Mr. Walker regulated his public conduct, and in conformity with them he may appear at times to have adopted politics hostile to the interests of his country. Throughout the whole of the American war, and during the commencement of the war with France in 1793, notwithstanding as an Englishman he felt the shame of national defeat and humiliation, yet in contests so unjust he deprecated the success of his country's arms. But, though his patriotism could not in his opinion supersede the unalterable laws of right, no one ever felt a purer or more ardent attachment to his native soil. He gloried in the name of Briton; he loved his country, because he regarded it as the seat of liberty, of sacred law and justice, of science, of arts,

of

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of civilization. To preserve this proud pre-eminence, to transmit unimpaired to future generations these distinguishing advantages, which he had received as the fairest portion of his inheritance, was with him a sacred duty, for which he held himself accountable to God, to his country, and to posterity. And though it was his fate through life, to pursue a thankless and a fruitless office in struggling against the vicious establishments of civil society, the corrupt and destructive policy of a selfish world, yet this did not relax his exertions, or abate the ardour of his zeal.

His talents however were not calculated merely for public life. Few men were more eminently gifted with all those qualifications, that enable an individual to shine and interest in society. To the circle in which he moved his habitual cheerfulness of disposition, his lively and animated conversation, a good-natured pliancy of mind, that, where the great interests of religion and morality were not concerned, would accommodate

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date itself to the various tastes and understandings of those with whom he mixed, rendered him at all times a welcome guest. At one period of his residence at Nottingham, he was singularly fortunate in his society. A kind of literary club, composed of a few select individuals, was accustomed to meet alternately at each other's house. The members of this club were generally of a description superior to what most provincial towns are capable of affording, men of cultivated understandings, and of great moral worth. By a singular fatality, most of these his early associates, though considerably his juniors in age, were removed from the stage before him.

There were yet remaining several, to whom, from long habits of intimacy, from a real regard for the excellence of their characters, and from a feeling of gratitude for personal kindnesses, he was sincerely attached. To relinquish these friends, who were endeared to him from so many considerations; to resign the regular exercise of a profession,

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profession, to which he was warmly devoted; to quit a congregation, of which he had been the respected pastor for twenty-four years; and, at an age that most would deem a sufficient plea for an exemption from the active duties of life, to undertake the management of an institution, that required unceasing vigilance and great mental exertion, to which his whole time and attention must necessarily be devoted, and in which he must forgo many personal comforts, evinced a vigour of mind, and a sacrifice of private feelings to public good, that perhaps few individuals under similar circumstances would have displayed. In this however he merely acted conformably to the tenour of his whole life; for never perhaps has there been a man, whose conduct was less influenced by a regard to self. Anxiety for the welfare of an institution, to the success of which he was taught to believe his personal services were necessary, alone dictated his removal to Manchester. The salary that was promised him there, as theological professor,

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fessor, was not more than he was receiving as minister at Nottingham; and even this, from an insufficiency in the funds of the college, he never received. For the last two or three years of his continuing in this situation, he had also the additional charge both of the mathematical and classical department; so that the whole burden of the institution rested upon himself; and to this his advanced age and declining health were unequal, as he has himself acknowledged in the following letter to a friend.

"It is in respect to your letter, which re-
"quired more than a common reply, that I
"have delayed my answer. I am every day so
"harassed and exhausted by having for this
"year imposed upon me the whole duty of
"three tutors, that I seldom retire in the
"evening with strength or spirit to en-
"counter the least exertion. My present
"labours are fitter for a Hercules in his
"youth than for an old man. Though I
"have never lived an idle life, all my former
"employment was but as amusement in
"compa-

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"comparison with my present. I have "twice a day the full exercise of my head "and voice for two hours at least, as theo- "logical tutor. The remainder of the day "summons me to the duties of classical "and mathematical, which, though easier, "as supposing a knowledge more ready to "come forward when required, yet cannot "be discharged without thought and reflec- "tion, and as an exercise of the voice greatly "fatigue and exhaust me. And what may "be called my intervals of relaxation are "considerably occupied in preparing my "mind for the work of the succeeding day. "To all this is to be added attention to exer- "cises, compositions, and to domestic regu- "larity and morals. Nor is this all. I "preach more than when I had the charge "of a congregation; but though this is gra- "tuitous, I cannot, to indulge myself, refuse "it, as there are some small congregations "around this town, who well deserve atten- "tion, but cannot maintain a minister."

As a member of the literary and philoso-

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phical society of Manchester, Mr. Walker was a frequent contributor to its Memoirs; and upon the death of Dr. Percival, he was appointed to succeed him as president. He continued for nearly two years after the resignation of his office in the college, to reside in the neighbourhood of Manchester; a spot he was induced to prefer, as it afforded him the amusement of a large garden, to which he was all his life much attached. Finding however that this situation did not agree with his health, he once more changed his place of abode, and removed to the village of Wavertree near Liverpool, where, after a long and active life spent in the cause of truth, of virtue, and of religion, a life on which he could look back with satisfaction and find no cause for regret, he had determined to wear out the evening of his days, in the society of a few friends of congenial sentiments and dispositions, by whom he was respected and beloved. But it was permitted him for little more than a year to enjoy the happiness, which such a situation afforded;

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afforded; and a great part of this was spent under the languor of increasing weakness, and in preparing for the publication of his works, an exertion too great for his declining health, so that in all probability it accelerated his dissolution.

It was manifest that the increasing infirmities of age were stealing fast upon him: the powers of his mind however remained unimpaired, he displayed the same vigour of intellect, and his wonted cheerfulness still continued to enliven his hours of relaxation and social intercourse: the only observable difference was occasional fits of abstraction, during which it is more than probable that his mind was occupied by such serious reflections as the intimations of declining life are calculated to impress; for it was apparent that there was a more guarded collection of himself, a more evident attempt to repress that warmth of temper, that quickness of spirit, which through life had been his constitutional temperament, and which he himself has acknowledged that he possessed

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sessed in a greater degree, than what with all his sense of duty to God and man, he had been well able to manage; and whence, from that inquietude of mind, and pain of self-condemnation, which the surprise of this passion had occasioned, had flowed many of the bitterest vexations which he had experienced in his passage through life*. Had he survived a few more years, it may be fairly presumed that he would have gone well nigh to have corrected a propensity so repugnant to his feelings and his principles, and where alone his moral character could with any justice be impugned. Thus had his sufferings no other effect than to exalt and purify his mind, and to subdue it more and more to those lessons of gentleness, patience, and resignation, that might the better fit it for a world of peace and love.

In 1790 he had published two volumes of Sermons. These had for several years been out of print, and having been much

* Vide his Sermons, vol. iv. p. 233.

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called for, he was induced to republish them with the addition of two other volumes. This, with two volumes of Essays which he designed for the press, was an important undertaking, which brought him to London in the spring of the year 1807. For some time after his arrival he enjoyed an unusual flow of health and spirits, but alas! his lamp of life was nearly exhausted, and it's present brightness was but a deceitful gleam, that preceded it's complete extinction. He was apparently conscious of this himself, for he dropped many expressions, denoting that he did not expect long to live. When in conversation with a near relation of the late Mr. G. Wakefield, he lamented that he had never seen him after his confinement at Dorchester; "but," says he, "I trust that "we shall meet in another world, a world to "which I find that I am fast approaching." Soon after this he was attacked by what appeared to be a violent lumbago, which resisting every effort to remove, he was advised to keep his bed. This produced the desired effect

effect in abating the pain, but at the same time his weakness kept increasing, whilst his appetite at length so totally failed him, that a little wine was the only sustenance he could be prevailed upon to take. Under these circumstances it was evident that the powers of life could not long be maintained: he soon after sank into an apparent insensibility, that continued to the last. In this state, to the surprise of his medical attendants, he continued for some days; his pulsation strong and regular, and his breathings free. Early, however, on the morning of the 21st of April it was discovered that *his pulse had ceased to beat, and that his last breath was expired*, though the actual termination of his life was so gentle, that it was not perceived.

The last act of his life, while a state of perfect consciousness remained, was an attempt to express himself in prayer; but the power of articulation was gone: nevertheless he was observed for some time after, with his hands folded upon his breast, to be absorbed

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sorbed in fervent devotion; thus dying, as he had lived, with a mind directed towards God and another world*.

It would be unjust to close this account without subjoining the faithful and animated portrait of Mr. Walker, drawn by his friend the late Gilbert Wakefield; who, in characterizing the various individuals that had presided over the Warrington institution at different times, passes the following eulogium upon his talents and his virtues:—"The *last* whom I shall mention of this laudable fraternity, but not the *least* in love,

* He died at the house of his friend and former pupil, Henry Smith, Esq. M. P., whose kind attentions during the whole of his illness caused the absence of his relatives to be on no other account regretted by them, than as they were deprived of the soothing consolation of administering in person the same friendly and affectionate offices.

Mr. Walker had three children, two of whom survive him: one married to Sir George Cayley, Bart. of Brompton House, near Scarborough: the other resides with his mother at Wavertree near Liverpool: the third died in its infancy.

"is

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" is the Rev. George Walker, *dissenting* mi-
" nister at *Nottingham*, a *fellow* of the *Royal*
" *Society*. This gentleman, take him for all
" in all, possesses the greatest variety of
" knowledge with the most masculine un-
" derstanding of any man I ever knew. He
" is in particular a *mathematician* of sin-
" gular accomplishment. His treatise on the
" Sphere long since published, and one upon
" the Conic Sections, are the vouchers of my
" assertions. His two volumes of Sermons
" are pregnant with the *celestial fire* of ge-
" nius, and the vigour of noble sentiments.
" His *Appeal to the People of England* upon
" *the Subject of the Test Laws* would not
" be much honoured by my testimony in
" it's favour as the best pamphlet published
" on that occasion; were not this judg-
" ment coincident with the decision of the
" honourable Charles James Fox, who has
" declared to a friend of mine the same opi-
" nion of it's excellence.

" But these qualifications, great and esti-

 " mable

"mable as they are, constitute but a mean
"portion of his praise. Art thou looking,
"reader! like Æsop in the fable, for a man?
"Dost thou want an intrepid spirit in the
"cause of truth, liberty, and virtue—an un-
"deviating rectitude of action—a bound-
"less hospitality—a mind, infinitely supe-
"rior to every sensation of malice and re-
"sentment—a breast, susceptible of the
"truest friendship, and overflowing with
"the milk of human kindness—an ardour,
"an enthusiasm, in laudable pursuits, cha-
"racteristic of magnanimity—an unwearied
"assiduity, even to his own hinderance, in
"public services? My experience can as-
"sure thee, that thy pursuit may cease, thy
"doubts be banished, and thy hope be
"realized: for this is the man.

"Who will now stay to compute the de-
"duction, which must be made from this
"sum of excellence, for sallies of passion
"devoid of all malignity, and often excited
"by a keen indignation against vice; and

"for

" for vehemence and pertinacity of disputa-
" tion? I have made the computation, and
" it amounts to an infinitesimal of the lowest
" order."

The following quotation also from the Rev. James Tayler's sermon published on the occasion of Mr. Walker's death, will prove acceptable to the reader, as accurately descriptive of his character: —

" In the moral portraiture of your de-
" ceased pastor, the most striking features to
" me appear to have been disinterested be-
" nevolence and genuine simplicity of man-
" ners. To every sordid, selfish feeling, to
" every mean artifice and subterfuge, I be-
" lieve him to have been an utter stranger.

" The benevolence of his heart was dis-
" played not only in the zeal, with which he
" engaged in, and promoted, every grand
" measure, calculated to advance the present
" comfort and the future welfare of his fel-
" low-creatures, but also, in the overflowing
" of good will, which, upon ordinary oc-
" casions,

"sations, prompted him to those little attentions, those minuter acts of kindness "which, in the man of the world, are the "produce of artificial politeness, but in him "were the unstudied suggestions of Christian "courtesy, of genuine benevolence.

"Nor less striking was the unaffected "simplicity of his manners, so inexpressibly "attractive!! His full stored and always "lively mind indulged in common to spor-"tive sallies of wit and merriment, with "the innocence and playfulness of a child. "Happily he had nothing of that gloomy "gravity, that austere reserve, which often "accompany distinguished talents and at-"tainments, and are so repulsive to the free-"dom of conversation and intercourse; "while at the same time he never lost sight "of the respect which is due to sacred sub-"jects, nor ever sanctioned licentious con-"versation. Replete with pleasantry, he "could, on proper occasions, be as strictly "serious as any man.

"His

"His aversion to every thing that bore a "resemblance to guile and dissimulation "was open and avowed; his abhorrence of "deceit he, on every occasion, strongly ex- "pressed; and his own uniformly undis- "guised, unreserved conduct fully proved, "that he inwardly felt that aversion, which "he outwardly manifested. For no motives "of worldly policy, or selfish regard, could "prevail upon him to have recourse to, or "to countenance in others, those petty ar- "tifices, for the accomplishment of even the "best designs, which are too commonly re- "sorted to, and thought allowable by many, "who are acknowledged to be, in the main, "upright and well-intentioned persons.

"To him was strictly applicable the cha- "racter of Nathaniel, that he was an Israelite "indeed, in whom there was no guile. He "really was the man which he appeared to "be. So that his character was as com- "pletely developed by the intercourse of a "few days, as by an intimacy of several "years. At the very first interview he ex-

"hibited

" hibited the marks of a most benevolent
" and cheerful disposition, of an open and
" unreserved temper, of a sincere love of
" truth and virtue, of a most vigorous and
" comprehensive mind, which was ever ac-
" tive and ever communicative."

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ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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ESSAYS.

ESSAY I.

ON THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE HUMAN FORM, ETC.

In order to judge whether the Grecian imitations, or any other imitations, of the Human Form be the most beautiful, it appears necessary that some standard, some general law or rule, should be admitted, in conformity to or in deviation from which the sentence of beauty or deformity may be safely passed. That this standard has an existence in nature can hardly be doubted; for, if man be the work of a designing artist, he must have been formed according to some model; and this model in the contemplation of the artist must be the standard of

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what is the most perfect of the species, and, as far as the form is concerned, of what is the most beautiful in the form. The mind of the artist may then be investigated in his work, and it might seem to be no very difficult thing to collect a tolerably accurate idea of what answers to the more perfect idea of the artist, by omitting what is incidental and peculiar to every individual of the species, and retaining what is universal. And perhaps by a standard thus collected, though insensibly, and without any deliberate purpose, every one does judge of what he deems to be beautiful in the form of his own kind, and in every form whatever. We find therefore that, in the estimation of the beautiful in the human form, there is a general agreement as to the contour or outline of the whole and of the parts, the comparative magnitude of each part, the proportion that each bears to each other and to the whole, and the order and degree in which each swells and falls. Whatever is remarkably excessive or defective, whatever strikingly offends

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offends against the general character and proportion of the parts, whatever beyond the general rule is abrupt and extravagant in the swell or fall, is almost universally rejected as not beautiful; because not answering to that medium standard which every one has erected in his own mind, and which he has collected from the exhibition of his species. There is therefore in the imagination of every one a standard, collected from observation, but insensibly and without design, to which he refers every form that attracts his attention, and agreeably to which he pronounces that it is beautiful or otherwise, and in what degree it pleases or offends. It is an ideal figure, which the eye of the mind can contemplate, and does contemplate, and does refer to, though the rational mind cannot describe this figure; because the figure has been imperceptibly formed, corrected, improved through life, in which the senses, and not reason, have been altogether employed. The ultimate figure, as a picture of the imagination, is

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the abstract of all the impressions which have been received from a multitude of original forms; preserving what is characteristic of all, and rejecting whatever is incidental, excessive or defective, superinduced by violence or art, or in any respect offending against the general character of the form.

This perhaps is the secret foundation of what we call taste, or the perception of the beautiful, whether as referred to the human or to any other form whatever. I do not say that this is the only foundation, and that there is no other rule or principle, by which our estimation of the beautiful is influenced; but I think it to be the principal foundation: and the remarkable consentaneity of taste and decision of the beautiful, especially of the human figure, proves that our rule is derived from nature, from our constant observation of the originals, as they have issued from the forming hand of the great artist; and that, thus acquiring an abstract idea of the whole, we enter as it were, whether intending it or no, into the mind of

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the artist himself, and erect a standard of what he designed as the most perfect, and therefore the most beautiful, in the form which he has given to man.

In this investigation of the standard of taste and the decision of the beautiful, although a general consent be acknowledged, yet it is manifest that the rule or standard will be more or less perfect, as the field of observation has been more or less extensive, and as successive comparisons with the standard already attained, and the introduction to more perfect forms, with fewer deviations from the medium character, have chastened in the imagination the picture of the beautiful. Every step in the progress towards this perfect image is the selection of a few from the general mass; from continued observation rejecting some from this few; admitting others; till the field of observation is exhausted, and we rest in the image which is the result of the whole.

But as the originals which are the subject of observation will in some respects vary,

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from the influence which climate, occupation, manners, and even the cultivation of mind, have on the human form, it will follow that a variation in the idea of the beautiful is to be expected, and that different circumstances may be so favourable to some, as to render their conception of the beautiful more approximate to the faultless truth and standard of nature.

This secret and imperceptible progress towards an ideal standard of beauty may be illustrated by the supposition of an experiment, easily to be conceived, though not easily to be carried into execution. If impressions from the faces of all the women in this kingdom at the age of twenty-one, were taken on any plastic substance, as suppose plaster of Paris; excluding however those who come into the world with obvious excess or defect, who have been maimed by injury, or blemished by any superinduced cause, as excess of labour or rest, intemperance, deficiency of sustenance, or any excess or defect of the passions of the mind; and

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and an artist were to form a face that was the mean of all these; it would surely be admitted that this face would be the perfect model of our national beauty. If the same experiment were made in other nations, excluding those in whom the extremes of climate necessarily induce a depravation of the form, the model of beauty in the female face would be equally obtained in these nations as their appropriate standard. And if from these several national standards the mean of them should also be taken, this last image must be admitted to be as perfect a representative of the beauty of face, of the whole female race, as is possible to be obtained.

This judgment is founded on the supposition that the design of the Creator is evidenced in his productions, and that the mean character of his productions of any species must approach the nearest to the perfect model contemplated in the Creator's mind. Our sense of beauty, our delight therein, can find its object only in the production of the

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Creator; our taste conforms itself to what is done, and the mean character must be the highest standard, the utmost conception of beauty that we can form. Either our ideal standard or image of beauty is born with us, or it is thus acquired: the former would be a mere arbitrary supposition; the latter accords with experience, is confirmed by reflection on our daily experience; it is the necessary consequence of every moment's impression from the objects presented to our view: and if our minds were not insensibly led to this result by being committed to the field around us, yet, as the means to the end, it might in this very way be accomplished by our deliberate act, by experiments similar to what I have supposed, in collecting the standard of national female beauty at the age of twenty-one.

It might be expected, therefore, that the standard of beauty would be one and the same to all; and so it is, as far as one and the same rule and judgment on any subject can be expected in the vast range and diversity

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sity of human beings. It has already been observed, that the greater is the variety and number of the objects that have been viewed, and attentively viewed, by any individual, the nearer will the standard of beauty in his mind conform to the mean character of the species which has been submitted to his view, and probably therefore to the truth of nature.

To a perfect uniformity in the judgment of beauty, it is requisite that the field of observation be equal to every one, that the mind of each observer be equally directed and equally attentive to the subject, that the circumstances which are favourable or unfavourable to beauty should be equal in the objects observed. But this equality has no existence, and therefore smaller variations in the estimation of beauty are certainly found: but withal, there is so much of consentaneity in the opinion of all mankind, as proves that the standard in every mind is derived from a common source, and has much of a common character. I can have no doubt that a Grecian beauty among the Greeks,

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Greeks, a Circassian beauty honoured by the admiration of the Asiatics, would be acknowledged as a beauty of high distinction by the western European, and that the European female whom the European taste has selected would be in no small degree applauded by the Greek and Asiatic. Perhaps, even a first rate African in the estimation of her fellow Africans would be allowed by the European, the Greek and Asiatic, excepting colour, to possess the essential characters of beauty.

It is probable therefore that the idea of beauty, though acquired by observation only of the examples presented to our view, goes beyond the limit of the materials from which it is derived, and is more perfect than the mean character of the objects observed. In acquiring the idea of this mean character we reject all obvious excess or defect; we obtain thereby an abstract idea of excess or defect; we admit this as still in some degree adhering even to the most perfect originals that we have seen; we conceive that still more

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more faultless examples may be found in the vast field of human life; and our imagination creates to itself a more perfect idea than our experience has presented.

The result of the whole is this: every one has within him a standard of beauty, and this standard is acquired by every one from the same source, and is in all of a common character; but will be more perfect, that is, more conformable to the truth of nature, as the field of observation has been more varied and extensive, as the attention has been more excited and directed to the investigation of beauty, and as the objects of observation have been in those circumstances which are most favourable to the preservation and perfection of the human form, and wherein the original stamp and design of nature may be, either not at all, or in the least degree, counteracted and injured by adventitious causes. I pretend not to judge, whether in this investigation of the standard of beauty there be any thing of novelty or ingenuity; it will be sufficient to my purpose,

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pose, if it be agreeable to truth, and be pertinent to the second object of this essay; and support the claim, which I assert for the Greeks, that in their statues are found the most perfect imitations of the beautiful in the human form, that have been introduced to our knowledge. If no proper standard of beauty can be acquired in any other way; if the Greeks perfected their conception of the beautiful by a nice and delicate attention to this rule; if they had more favoured originals to collect from, and had a freer access to these rich originals; if the Greek statuaries were men of the first consideration, and, besides their special art, had their minds raised and chastened by all the advantages which learning, science and cultivated taste can confer; then it is a well-founded presumption, that their statues, as imitations of the beautiful, are of the first form, and have probably not been equalled by the similar productions of any other nation, if to the statuaries of no other nation the same means and advantages have been extended.

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This standard of beauty thus acquired, and the only standard common to all men, may be called the Sentimental standard; as its primary derivation is from the immediate sense or impression of the human form upon the mind of the observer, and its ultimate result is the mean of all the agreeable sensations which the beautiful of human form have made upon the mind.

But there is also a Rational standard, which more contemplative and reflecting minds derive from a consideration of the uses to which the human form subserves. Beauty, though in itself an object of regard distinct from every other consideration, must, in the productions of every wise artist, be subordinate to utility; and therefore in those works, which we refer to the Great Artist, we expect that beauty shall be reconciled with utility. Nor are we disappointed; all that is beautiful in the human form, which we contemplate with so much delight, is, as a mean, in perfect harmony with the numerous and diversified uses for which the

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the human form was designed by its Creator.

Beauty could not be a primary object in the mind of the original artist, nor are we authorised perhaps to say that in our sense of beauty it was any object at all. When this artist designed man, *that* must to him have appeared to be the best form, which was the best fitted to the field of action in which man was intended to move, and in which it was intended that he should reap the conveniences and utilities of his being. If man had been designed to be an animal of speed, a form similar to that of the hare, of the greyhound, or the antelope, might have been assigned to him; or if not precisely a similar form, yet, in the limbs adapted to motion, a lightness of bone, and firmness of muscle, similar to what characterize, these animals. And by parity of reason, the qualities of the ox or elephant, if slowness of motion united with great capacity of burthen had been designed to be his predominant character; or if a temperament of speed with burthen, then

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then a tempered union of the forms which distinguish the hare and the ox, as in the horse, might have been the character of the human form. But as each of these uses in a very limited degree, and subservient to many other higher uses; such as quickness of movement towards every part; the *os sublime* to contemplate heaven as well as earth, and each with the greatest range; exquisite sensibility, particularly in the hands, which are the instruments of mechanic operations; and, in fine, the unnumbered and varied uses which the inventive and creating mind of man can meditate, were intended to constitute the character of man: we find therefore that a form is assigned to him, which is adapted to all these uses, and to each in that degree in which it contributes to the concentred and harmonious utility of his whole being. But I mention not this, with any of the views of the naturalist or divine, but merely to show that man can in some degree enter into the mind of his Creator, and, pleased with his form, pronounce

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pronounce also that it is good; and believe that it is beautiful, because it is eminently useful; and as, without any consideration of utility, he pronounces that to be the most beautiful of all the varieties of the human form, which is the mean of them all, so infer the same conclusion, when he estimates the mean of all utilities, regard being had to the respective worth and dignity of these utilities.

It is therefore more than probable, that whether we estimate beauty by the mean of utility, or simply by the mean of form, we shall arrive at the same, or nearly the same conclusion; we shall attain the same standard. But the investigation of these utilities in all their comprehension and reference to their best result is more difficult, and, except in obvious and familiar instances, does not excite attention in common observers. This common sense of man, however, in the most familiar instances, is an evidence of vast import; the mind expects and is reconciled to the more delicate judgments of more attentive

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tive observers; and a persuasion is induced, that if man were competent to the complete analysis of himself, he would find that the mean of his whole form is admirably adapted to the mean of all his utilities.

It is surely agreeable that the standard of beauty derived from two very different sources should be found to be one and the same. In receiving that as beautiful which is, we defer to the divine wisdom; in the appeal to the reason of man, the mind and act of the Deity are justified to the mind of man.

But there is also a use in referring the judgment of beauty to these two tests, as they mutually serve to obviate some difficulties, to reply to some objections, and to correct some erroneous judgments to which we might be liable, if we had only one test to appeal to. The expectation of the beautiful, according to the sentimental standard, in all of the human kind, is repelled when we take into our view the varieties of human life, and admit that these varieties require a

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conformation nicely adapted to the useful in all. Whether it be that difference of climate, of situation, of employment bodily or mental, and of age, induce, as the mere effect of a cause, such smaller variations of the human form; or that man generally issues from the hand of his Maker with such variations of form as may furnish all the diversified agents fitted to bear their several parts in the vast community of men, makes no difference in the conclusion. Wherever the diversities of the useful require a deviation from the absolute standard of sentimental beauty, we submit our judgment thereto, and acknowledge a specific beauty; and with delight acknowledge, where adaptation to strength, to toil, to hardihood, to boldness, to enterprise, to speed, to versatility or any other peculiar end, is the predominating character of the form. In the distribution of men therefore into classes according to their situations and subservience in life, the rational standard admits a beauty peculiar and appropriate to each; which if not found would

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would be deemed to be a defect, though the degree in which this specific character is required would not be admitted either in the rational or sentimental standard of the mean perfect beauty of the whole human kind. Thus a length of arm and lightness of leg are well adapted to the manœuvres of the sailor, but would be unsuited to the pedestrian, in whom is required a strong and muscular leg with as little super-incumbent weight of body as is consistent with general vigour. And thus, in the different occupations of men, the estimated beauty of form in each class will be adapted to the part which each has to sustain in life. A general, when he looks with pride on the manly figure of his soldiers, has a different standard of beauty in his eye from that by which he would judge of the graceful and elegant in an assembly of the higher ranks of life. We observe a similar rule in the judgment we form of the different classes of animals. The beautiful in the lion, the tiger, the elephant, the bull, the horse, and

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the dog, is referred to a different standard in each; and even in those species which come more under the observation and use of man, as they are subdivided into different kinds, they have each their appropriate destination and appropriate character, and the mean form in each subordinate kind is allowed to be the standard of beauty in that kind, though varying from the standard of beauty in each other kind, and varying from the standard of the beautiful in the whole genus, where an aptitude to a particular destination is not contemplated. The horse for the dray, the road, the race, the field of chase and the field of war, have each their proper beautiful of form, while each partakes of those qualities which enter into the mean beautiful of them all. And the same is observed of the subdivisions of the canine race: the shepherd's dog, the terrier, the spaniel, the fox-hound, the greyhound, the bull-dog and the mastiff, to which we may add the favourites of the ladies, are all estimated by very different standards of beautiful

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tiful form, and yet are all referable to a form which is the mean of them all, and is conceived to be the most perfect idea of beauty in the genus.

This attention to the useful, and a fitness for the part which each is intended to act in the plan of their Creator, is strikingly witnessed in the idea which every one entertains of what is beautiful in the form of each of the two sexes of the human race. No one conceives the beautiful in the man to be exactly transferable to the beautiful in the woman, and if the most perfect beauty of the female were found in a male, the eye would be disgusted; that male would be the object of scorn or ridicule, not of approbation.

Perhaps the mere abstract idea of beautiful form, independent of every other consideration, would pronounce the gentler undulations of the masculine outline to be more conformed to its standard, than the richer swell and deeper falls of the female figure. Yet, in despite of this abstract judgment, the

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most perfect masculine figure, if contemplated in a female, would not be considered as beautiful.

The same submission to the useful, or to what we presume to be useful, because it is according to the order of nature, is observed in the estimation of beauty, as it is referred to the different periods of human life. There is a different beauty in infancy, in boyhood, in youth, in manhood, and in age. The child in the arms of the Madonna, and John attracting the notice of his infant cousin by his playful admiration, though the difference of their age be but very inconsiderable, yet would each, independent of all regard to the part which each is designed to sustain in riper years, be expected to exhibit a difference of form and aspect. In the full-blown rose of Lucretia, and the opening bud of Virginia, which equally inflamed the passions of Tarquin and the Decemvir, and led them to the perpetration of the most daring and dangerous crimes, though in each we imagine something that answers to our perfect idea of

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of female beauty, yet in each we look for a delicate discrimination of exterior, something appropriate of form and feature, expressive of their respective age and situation.

In the domestic group of mother, wife, children and attendants, which issued from Rome to avert the vengeance of Coriolanus from his country; if imagination give a beautiful figure to each, it will be a beauty proper to the age of each, and proper also to the relation which each bears to the avenging hero, and to the shades of affection and interest with which each must be impressed from all the circumstances of the interview; while in Coriolanus himself, that which we should acknowledge as beautiful and proper in his figure would very materially differ from that of all the preceding.

There is therefore indubitably, as is generally allowed, a peculiar beauty of form and feature adapted to each of the passions; but here also, in order to the perfect, the mean must be observed; and this perfect form, as

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expressive of the passions, rejects the predominance of any one feature, which usurps over the others, which subdues the whole form and countenance to one characteristic and generally disagreeable expression. This must enter in no small degree into all our judgment of the human figure; the sense both of the beautiful and the proper must associate with our conceptions of the mind, which the configuration of the form in all its parts, and in all the acting of mind thereon, is fitted to express. In every human figure, which on any account attracts our attention, the immediate impulse is to read the mind in the face. Animals read it; it is an universal character, and designed to be read in some degree by all who have an interest in its information; for it is the handwriting of the Almighty; and inasmuch as mind is superior to body, that form is pronounced to be more beautiful, which in every expression presents a beautiful mind, and at the same time is conformed to the interesting affections which are proper to the

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varied situation and circumstance of mind. Perfect beauty therefore supposes perfect beauty of mind, and deformity in both is the violation of the mean. Perfect mind admits of no predominant passion but benevolence; but even benevolence itself would be tame and insipid, if it excluded every other passion. It would not be suited to the field of human action and human sympathy, and could not invite our sympathy in return. The only influence of passion that can be delineated with an attention to perfect beauty is that which admits the expression of every passion; but of each according to its worth and dignity, and the power which each in its place and rank ought to have over the form and countenance; and that face which bears the expression of this temperament and proportion will be, so far as respects the influence of mind, the most beautiful.

But even in the expression of the passions, the male and female standard will differ, nor can the temperament required in the one be expected

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expected in the other. That mildness and placidness of countenance, which is the lovely picture of a gentle female mind, would not give the promise of a masculine mind, nor answer to our standard of masculine beauty; and though the morality of mind will not submit her rule to any examples of human life, and will without hesitation pronounce that countenance and figure to be deformed, on which the violent and intemperate passions have stamped their character; yet in the imitations of man as he is, the very imitation will soften the deformity, and render that not only acceptable, but approved, and as a beauty in the art, which we should fly from with disgust and horror in the real object.

So far then we have proceeded in the examination of the beautiful, not merely as a prelude to our deciding on the excellence of the Grecian statues, though even as a prelude this appeared necessary; for, without some rule founded in nature, all decision on the beautiful in the imitative arts of the Greeks

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Greeks might be considered as mere opinion. If we have not erred then in this previous analysis, it has appeared that, in the subject of the human form, the sentimental and the rational judgment of beauty are not discordant, but that the beautiful as a matter of feeling harmonizes with the useful as the end; and as an influence from this, that the perfection of beauty as an absolute standard must be looked for in the middle form of the whole collected human race, excluding all whom accident, violence, monstrous births, or the extremes of climate, food and labour may have disfigured; and also in the middle form between the extreme of age, in which the subject has not attained to or declined from the point of perfection, because all the varieties of the human form seem to respect this medium both of number and age. It has also appeared, that in the distribution of occupation and character, and in the expression of the passions, that interesting language of the human form and feature, there are separate standards, which have each

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each a specific beauty as their appropriate character, though subordinate to the more universal standard, and acknowledging it as their genus. Not greatly deviating from this higher standard, each of these distributions must be distinguished by their characteristic form, or they would not be beautiful in their place.

Having therefore to the best of my ability laid this foundation, I shall proceed

II. To inquire whether those statues which have been preserved to us as monuments of Grecian art and taste do correspond, and in what degree, to those high conceptions of beauty in the human form, which both from sentiment and reason we are led to entertain.

Appeal then to the sentimental standard, that is, to the most abstract idea of simple beauty, without any consideration of utility, or destination to particular purposes and offices in the distribution of human action. Submit to the eye the best of the Grecian statues of this character, submit them to the severest

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severest examination, place them before the ideal standard in the mind, and say whether imagination can figure to itself more exquisitely finished models of perfect human form. Can the most fastidious critic say that this part is too large, that too small, that the wave of the contour might be more happily exhibited? That timidity wherewith nature fears to exceed, when she delights to present to us the perfect of beauty, is delicately charactered; every thing is in that happy medium, that mild temperament and proportion which perfect beauty requires; no muscle harshly obtrudes itself to break the charming roundness of the form; the minutest parts, the joints, the fingers, the toes, the very dimple, as impressed by the playful finger of love, is touched in the truth of nature; in fine, the eye of the delighted spectator may look for hours and days, and not dare to say, not be inclined to say, in what respect they could be altered so as to be rendered more grateful to him. The eye is not satiated with viewing them; they strike

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strike not at first with their full impression, but every return to them makes a deeper impression, unfolds new beauties, discovers the grace of nature in her most finished works, and this perhaps is the most decisive proof of their superior excellence. If any thing be wanting, it is colour and the expression of the eye, but of these stone and marble are incapable; the artist has done his part, he has effected all that the material was susceptible of. Perhaps it is owing to this, the impossibility of communicating to stone the soul which speaks in the countenance, that the face of the Venus de Medici answers not to our expectation, that it appears to be not so beautiful as the whole and every other part of the form. But the artist has given to the whole attitude the expression of apprehensive modesty, and of the will to move: you expect the statue to step from the pedestal. In the Apollo Belvidere is presented every thing that elegance and grace with a chastened severity and dignity can require in a perfect masculine form. The beauty

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beauty of Antinoüs, the catamite of Hadrian, is feminine; but the form of Apollo is such as mind giving its character to form and countenance would prepare you to expect. He is not Jupiter, nor Mars, nor Bacchus; there is blended in his figure the excellence of each, but with no extreme; he is such as you would look for in the ruler of the day, the president of the muses, in the handsomest and the wisest of the gods.

This delight, which the Grecian antiques excite, and as a matter of feeling, without any philosophical inquiry, has been witnessed by all, in various ages and nations. The Greeks copied from nature; her most perfect forms were their standard: succeeding artists have received their productions as a standard, and looked for reputation as they approximated to the perfection of their works. The antient Romans in the highest pride of their empire deemed nothing excellent in the art of statuary but what was of Greek fabrication. Their admiration knew

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knew no bounds; and though, of the statues preserved to us, many are of an age posterior to the earlier Cæsars, it is probable that they were all the workmanship of Grecian genius. The school denominated the Roman, though the Roman empire had been long extinct, was formed on the basis of Greek art; it aspired to no higher honour than to be the imitator of the antient Greek: yet, inimical as imitation is supposed to be to great exertion, this school is allowed to have surpassed all other moderns in the beauty and character of its figures;—while other subsequent schools of statuary, which have wrought from their own ideas, and been laborious enough in the execution, have each exhibited less beauty, less correctness, less conformity to what every one feels to be το καλον in the original. This concurrent testimony may almost be allowed to be decisive. Among the artists of Italy, and succeeding to them, in other countries, there are who appear to have devoted their whole lives to the study of whatever

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ever is most beautiful in nature or in art; and if their unqualified deference to the Greek be not admitted, I wonder from what, with a more refined and better furnished mind, we may expect a juster sentence.

The artists of later days ascend no higher in the pursuit of the beautiful than the models which Greece has transmitted to us. Have any of them retraced the steps of the Greek artist in the formation of one celebrated statue? Have they selected from individuals of approved form, whatever is most beautiful in each, and thus composed a more perfect whole? Until this be done, it is mere presumption to suppose that they will surpass the Greek, that with all the aid of the antients they will produce a more perfect model of beauty, that this second extract of the beautiful would more answer to our most perfect idea from nature.

There is reason to believe that the Grecian artists did select the most beautiful originals, and, from what appeared to be most perfect in each, formed their mean

figure of the beautiful. It was, in such a part could execute, the summary of what nature had dispersed in a variety of the best chosen subjects.

It is further to be observed, and, in our very important to the purpose, that no climate, no state of society, no modes of life and manners, were ever more happily adapted to the preservation of beauty, to the production of the most beautiful and most perfect designs of nature. A happy temperament of elements, inviting to enjoyment, and also to exercise, activity and sportiveness, simplicity of diet and simplicity of manners, were eminently favourable to the primary production and to the preservation of beautiful form. The concurrence of these advantages is so powerful as to resist the barbarism and oppression of the Turkish government, and even to this day preserve to the native Greek race their preeminence of beauty.

The Grecian games invited the most perfect of the species, in varied character and

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exhibition, with all the advantages of exposure, and with all the action proper either to strength or grace; which must have furnished to the Grecian artist models of perfection in nature, and of the truth of nature in her best specimens, such as modern artists can have no access to. Our modern manners admit not of such exhibitions; and if in a moral view we have gained thereby, the loss to the imitative arts of sculpture and painting is incalculable. Nor, if it were otherwise, is it probable that, in our climates and with our modes of life, any such specimens of the beautiful working of nature can be furnished. It will be allowed at least that the livelings, which are exhibited in our modern academies, are no substitute for the ampler and richer display of form and character, from which the Grecian sculptor and painter copied their admired productions.

The freedom of the Grecian mind must also have had a considerable influence on the feature and form. The influence of the mind on the feature, where the soul speaks in all

its energies and character and dominion of sections, is acknowledged by all; but is it not equally considered to what degree the mind, cherished from infancy in all that generous freedom, which is the gift of its author, may determine the form, and rear it up in the grace and elegance and beauty which answer to the best intention of nature. The easy flowing dress of the Greeks corresponded with this freedom of mind; whatever nature designed, she freely operated: no restraint forced her into awkward, ill-proportioned and ungraceful deviations; and what freedom of mind, ease of dress, salubrity of climate, and simplicity of diet and manners left unfinished, their gymnastic exercises completed. In modern Europe every thing almost is adverse to the production and preservation of beautiful form; mind is not so pure and unadulterated, modes of life are not so equal, nor so conformed to simple elegance, the form of the great mass of the community is as much injured by excess of labour, depression of

mind, and exposure to unequal climate, with scantiness of food, or irregular supplies of it, and not of a simple and salubrious kind, as the forms of the higher ranks is impaired by excess of food, equally insalubrious; exclusion from air and exercise; manners that awake no mental energies, invite to no pleasant, healthful, sportiveness; intemperance in the hours of rest; and, what alone is sufficient to every depredation of form and beauty, confinement in the poisoned vapour of crowded and heated rooms. The inference is obvious. The modern European cannot rival the artist of antient Greece. He has not the same originals. Nature presented herself unviolated to the Greek; injured and perverted, she can exhibit to the European only her weaker productions.

To these considerations may be added, what I have already alluded to, that the Greek artists were men of the first form, well educated, and of high consideration. Superior instruction, and admission to the highest honours, elevate the mind, excite grander

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conceptions, and exalt the taste; especially in an age and country where the passion for fame was the stimulant to all great exertions, and furnished to every one the most generous gratification. The philosophic Socrates, that wondrous man among the Greeks, was himself a statuary, and is said to have sculptured three very beautiful figures of the Graces. Without intending any thing unhandsome to later artists, the same elevation of mind cannot be equally affirmed of them. The motive of gain, always sordid and depressing, and equally accessible to the lowest minds, has too much usurped over the more generous one of fame.

I shall conclude this essay, which perhaps is already too long, with another very powerful argument in favour of Grecian art; which may be inferred from the great length of time that it flourished, and the innumerable productions which it furnished. This argued a degree of fame attached to it, and an encouragement to rivalship, of which we have no example. We may judge of this

from

from the immense number of works which escaped the repeated plunder of the Romans; and from the valuable remnant which to our day has survived the destruction of ages, of successive revolutions, and the rudest barbarism. Memmius, Æmilius Verres, and proconsuls, and prætors, and generals, and Romans of rank and taste, beyond all calculable amount, might have been thought to have exhausted Greece of her rich treasures of art; but succeeding to them Tiberius Nero carried off a valuable plunder from the Acropolis, Delphi, and Olympia, and yet in these very places not fewer than three thousand statues were remaining in the time of Pliny. Can any thing in modern times compare to this? Can modern artists recur to so grand a feast of the senses, so glorious a school for instruction in their art? Does the patronage of later times present any thing like such a provocative to genius and rivalship, as we may presume to have been the character of Greek and Roman antiquity?

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ESSAY II.

ON TRAGEDY, AND THE INTEREST IN TRAGICAL REPRESENTATIONS.

THE propensity which human nature has, in every age and nation, discovered for spectacles and representations of a tragic kind, though it be universally confessed that the sensations and passions excited thereby are in their nature painful, and often exquisitely so, is at first view so singular and contradictory a phænomenon, as could not fail to draw the attention of moralists and philosophers; and challenge all their ingenuity to reconcile so irregular a trait of the human character with the most approved likeness of the human mind. There are, indeed, some examples of this propensity so rude, uncivilized, and inhuman, as mock all efforts of ingenuity to reduce them to a consistent and agreeable system. Such were the exhibitions

of

of gladiators among the Romans; the tournaments and justs of Gothic chivalry; such are the bull-fights of the Spaniards; the combats with the broad sword; the bull-baitings, cock-fights, and Shrove-tide amusements of our own nation; together with the horrid jollity of the North American tribes, exulting over the tortures of their ill-fated prisoners.

Most or all of these national reproaches are, in a greater or less degree, the offspring of a rude military genius and savage heroism; which, by an early familiarity with the excesses and cruelties of war, let loose in all its wildness, have triumphed over nature, over the kinder dictates of a general humanity. In these, the pleasure of the spectators, unnatural as it is, is pure and unmixed; by whatever means they have subdued their minds to the capacity of this pleasure, when once the relish is acquired, their continued propensity to such scenes is perfectly natural, as it is not combated by any feeling of sympathetic pain during the exhibition.

hibitions. This is clearly attested of the Roman people, by the uniform accounts of their own historians:—foreign nations ascribed their hardiness in war to this familiarity with blood and death in the amphitheatre; and a Syrian monarch, ambitious, at any rate, to rival the Roman grandeur, hoped to render his effeminate Asiatics equally intrepid and unappalled amidst the horrors of battle, by introducing the same sanguinary entertainments in peace. It is a proof that humanity had little interest in the fatal consequences of the Gothic tournaments, and bull-fights of the Spaniards, when that sex, whom compassion and an abhorrence from spectacles of blood may be supposed the last to forsake, was admitted to the most conspicuous seats, as if to gratify them were the chief object of the entertainment. All is mad mirth, and drunken joy, with an American village, while their captive is wasting under their protracted tortures; compassion, or even indifference, would vitiate the festival. Humanity may have repelled from, but never

ver invited a single guest to the cruel entertainments of our own nation. It is to that polished humanity, which a cultivated philosophy and a purer religion have introduced amongst us, that we owe the disrepute into which these vulgar jollities have at length happily fallen.

Such representations are, therefore, utterly dissimilar, in their effects upon the heart, to the representations of tragedy and romance. Humanity renounces the one, but welcomes the other. In those a brutal joy reigns triumphant; in these if there be a joy it is of a singular kind; it wears all the dress of sorrow; and the heart feels that there is a pain more than proportioned to the joy. It is surely, therefore, unphilosophical, to reduce under one class propensities which are of so different a cast and influence; nor can that ingenious French critic, the Abbé du Bos, be justified in deriving them, without distinction, from one common source in the human mind.

But whence then is derived, and how are

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we to account for, this strange intermixture of pain and something like joy, excited, in the same instant, by the same object, each apparently dependent on each other, and yet not blended together in one undistinguished mass?—Before I attempt the solution of this singular but universal character of man, it may not be amiss to take a brief view of some of the most celebrated theories on this subject, and the rather, as the examination of these may lead to the true solution.

The French critic, just mentioned, the Abbé du Bos, whose reflections on poetry, painting, and music, form a very entertaining work, refers the solution of this difficulty to that aversion which we have to indolence; and in consequence to the delight we feel in having our most active and lively passions roused.

This account is striking and bold, as it derives a great deal from one simple and uniform principle. If, indeed, there be such a principle in human nature, exactly as he represents it, original and independent, and

if it be adequate to the effect which he ascribes to it; and if the mind be sensible of such a reference in the instant of its most interesting emotions; and if the inclination to be thus moved, be proportioned to the force of this supposed principle; we could not wish for a more satisfactory solution, for one which more happily applied itself to the whole subject in question.

Another ingenious Frenchman, Monsieur Fontenelle, so well known to the literary world by his Dialogues, History of Oracles, and Plurality of Worlds, in some reflections on the subject of poetry has hazarded the following fine-spun theory: Pleasure and pain, says he, like many other extremes, approach, and, at a certain point, pass into each other. Pleasure, pushed too far, becomes pain; and the movement of pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. He is obliged to adopt into his system the fundamental principle of Du Bos; for the heart, he says, loves to be moved, and therefore objects, which are melancholy, and even disastrous

disastrous and sorrowful, are adapted to it; provided that they are softened by some circumstance. This softening circumstance, according to him, is the comfortable reflection, that the whole is but a fiction; without which, the spectacle would be painful beyond the degree in which it is capable of passing into pleasure.

This is the spirit of Fontenelle's theory; a theory so exceedingly refined, that we hardly know how to lay hold of it. It does not present us with any thing analogous to the real feelings of the heart; and is, indeed, contradictory to the very nature of things. Pleasure and pain, as simple sensations, have no intercourse with each other, though the transitions from the one to the other may be exceedingly quick, and may have their origin from the same external objects. For as objects are of a mixed character, the sensations may be mixed also; and in some, the painful circumstance, after a certain interval, may disappear, and vice versa. In which the characters of the painful and the pleasing

continue

continue undiminished, the sensations which correspond to them will continue also, and each, as the cause of them are alternately contemplated, be separately excited, or that which is the balance of the separate sensations will remain.

If, as Fontenelle asserts, pain can of itself pass into pleasure, and without any additional cause, and in the moment of the transition that the pleasurable sensation presents itself, it will be exceedingly difficult to distinguish, according to this theory, when the predominant sensation will be. If the painful sensation be then evanescent, the pleasurable one ought to be nearly annihilated; if the painful one be then at its height, the sensation of pleasure must be hardly perceivable, and cannot, methinks, account for the interest which we have in the representation. For the feelings, during a tragical representation, are not of this dubious and indeterminate character; the pain and the pleasure, if we must give the denomination of pleasure to the interest which we have in the sufferings

spectacle,

spectacle, are distinct, and at the same moment are each highly exquisite. There is, in truth, no passing of the one into the other.

It is a further objection to the theory of Fontenelle, that he has assigned no proper source of pleasure, which can give its complexion to the pain; the circumstance which he has noticed is merely an alleviation, and can only account for a diminution of the pain. This circumstance of the whole being but a fiction, has exceedingly little, if any, influence in softening and alleviating our painful sensation; though it be true, that if it were a spectacle of real misery, we should be repelled from approaching it at all. But it is also true, that the more the fiction is kept out of view, the more perfect is the art of the poet, and the more perfect the effect of the imitation upon the mind of the spectator; whose interest rises to its greatest height, when, by a kind of divine power, he is carried entirely out of the consideration of self, and contemplates nothing but the misery, as if it were real, and enters into it

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with all the glow of natural feeling. The solution, therefore, must be sought for in some other principle than the whimsical conceit of a middle something, between pleasure and pain, founded on the cold reflection, that the whole is a delusion. It may account, in some degree, for the phlegmatic dialogues of a French tragedy-maker, and for the dubious sensation, the middle something between pleasure and pain, which they excite; but will never unfold the feelings which the magic genius of Shakespeare stirs up in the soul.

The selfish system in morals, which extracts a joy out of a painful scene, from the grovelling consideration, that, whatever sufferings are exhibited to our view, we are ourselves in a state of perfect security, is so grossly false, that a moment's consideration shakes it off with indignation, and leaves it to the sordid soul which first conceived the idea. This would suppose that suffering and distress were in themselves a grateful spectacle, if they affect not ourselves; that there

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was a real malignity in the human heart, and that it recurred to them as to a feast. This is a horrid untruth: such spectacles are, in their nature, painful; and all that the consideration of our own security can effect, will be only to render them less painful; but of itself can give us no interest in them, nor render them at all attracting to us.

The celebrated David Hume has offered a more plausible theory; or rather, has added to the systems of Du Bos and Fontenelle, by referring the greatest part of that pleasure which springs out of the bosom of uneasiness, and yet retains all the features and symptoms of distress and sorrow, to the bewitching power of that eloquence with which the melancholy scene is represented. The effect, he says, is like to the composition of two forces, which, combining together, produce a new direction, a direction not contrary to that of either, but partaking of both.

Of these four illustrations of the question,

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the first and the last, viz. of Du Bos and Hume, require a particular discussion, in the progress of which the truth will probably unfold itself.

It is a misfortune, in moral as in natural philosophy, that the theory, which is to account for important phænomena, is often the creature of a bold and lively imagination, and not the modest result of careful observation and experiment. As a theory, which is built on this solid ground of observation and experiment, will always follow us downwards to the explanation of facts; so every fanciful system is found to decline this test; and, if compelled thereto, confesses its insufficiency to account for the phænomena of nature.

It is, therefore, a general objection to both these systems, in the first view of them, that the principles, to whose operation they ascribe such singular effects, are either not at all present to the mind, while their influence is supposed to be exerted and felt; or make a very dubious appearance, and utterly

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vanish at that critical moment, when the effect of the tragic imitation is the greatest; viz. when their presence ought to be most conspicuous and manifest to the very sense. Who, in the moment when the heart is rent and agonized with a tragic scene, can say to himself, that he converts the exquisitely painful feelings of that moment into the character of pleasure; or so as to be attracted by, and be passionately interested in, the scene; because his soul abhors the languor of indolence, and delights to be violently moved? Or who, with Mr. Hume, is ruminating on the ingenuity and eloquence of the artist, which can give to a fictitious scene all the glowing colours of nature? Who, under the possession of sympathetic sorrow, has his eye fixed upon an object of intellectual taste, and feasts in proportion to the opinion which he has of the poet's skill?

If the system of Du Bos be true, our attraction to spectacles of a tragic character, and the interest which we feel in the representation of them, ought to be proportioned

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to the perturbation of the mind, and to the violence of the emotions which are excited. But the most violent emotions shall be attempted to be raised, while we are only disgusted with the scene; because the whole is destitute of that single requisite, which alone has power to attach us to misery. The play of The Libertine abounds with scenes which address themselves to our terror and indignation; but we abhor the scenes, because they exhibit no field for a benevolent compassion; they are not the tragedy of a man, but of a fiend; it is not human nature, but hell, which is exhibited. There is enough of violent action, enough of terror and distress, to rouse and agitate; but being out of the field of man, we cannot sympathize; or our horror and indignation are stronger than our sympathy, and we detest a picture which awakens not those divine feelings to which the soul of man delights to commit itself.

Otway, the eldest son of Shakespeare, has greatly offended in this view, and greatly lessened

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lessened the impression of his genius, by the immorality and profligacy of his principal characters. We cannot feel for them as we wish, and our interest in their sufferings is diminished, as they appear to deserve them. Some touching pictures of innocent and virtuous distress, to which a pure and benevolent sympathy attaches itself, have rescued him perhaps from our utter disgust. The innocent, the gentle Monimia, and the more dignified virtue of Belvidera, relieve the horror of the villains with whom they are unhappily associated, and support in us an interest through the whole drama.

The tragedy of The Robbers, and other productions of the German drama, have the vice of Otway, but with more extravagance and scorn of nature, and therefore are more repulsive to the heart. With them to create what God never designed, and what human wickedness never meditated, is Genius; and to terrify is Sublime. If the system of Du Bos, therefore, be true, these are the per-

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fection of the drama: but, in defiance of his principle, they do not attract, they repel; and their admirers mistake astonishment for an impression of the grand; and a horror and revulsion from scenes of dreadful suffering, for an impression of the pathetic.

But, on this system, the interest in the representation ought to be proportioned, not only to the bustling of the scene, but to the bustling disposition of the spectators. This must be allowed, if the abhorrence of indolent repose, and the delight in being stirred, be the secret cause which attracts us to misery; and derives to us a pleasure in spectacles which in their nature are painful. But this is utterly contrary to fact; and the attention to fact, in this instance, as in what I have already noticed, will demonstrate the incompetence of Du Bos' theory; and discover the true source of the phænomenon. Men of the most active turn, who with hardly any other motive than to follow the violent impulse of their own turbulent spirits, can throw society into convulsions, and feast

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feast as it were on those continually renewed scenes of distress and terror which mark their ferocious path, are not the persons on whom you would expect the representations of tragedy to produce their natural and most powerful effect; but the gentle, the flexible, the compassionate, and benevolent. The former resemble the characters which, in the introduction to this essay, I have noticed among the Romans, Goths, Spaniards, Indians, and bull-baiting Englishmen. But the man of composed and tempered manners, in whose breast compassion, mercy, and benevolence sovereignly reign, is shocked at such characters; nor could possibly encounter their rude and brutal entertainments; yet his heart is the theatre whereon tragedy acts all her glorious wonders.

The same objection bears with almost equal force against the system of Hume. It is not the man of letters, who may be supposed to be the best judge of composition and eloquence; nor yet the man of a lively imagination, to whom the effect of tragical repre-

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representations is peculiarly appropriate. Though if a heart mellowed to pity be joined to these advantages, the interest in such spectacles will perhaps receive an increase from this superadded source; but tragedy exercises her utmost power on even the unlearned and untutored, if there be found a feeling and benevolent heart.

The same judgement is further illustrated from the powerful effect on an audience of a story happily adapted to the purpose, though the composition be materially faulty. It shall awake all the passions in which tragedy rejoices, more than all the faultless productions of the Greek and French drama. Banks and Southern are poets of but a middle fame; yet the Earl of Essex and Oronooko will dissolve an audience in tears, so long as the human heart and the inclinations which it has received from its Maker shall endure. If tragedy owe her attractions to the eloquence of the poet; it is to the eloquence of nature, not of art. An untutored genius, having strong conceptions, a heart that

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that can enter into the feelings of a fellow heart, quick in catching the most striking features of distress, judgement to select a happy tale of virtuous suffering, and simplicity to follow nature in her plain walk, will in the fabrication of tragedy reach its highest excellence. Such was Shakespeare, and such, in a less degree, were a few of his neglected cotemporaries; it was to their exquisite sensibility, to their ignorance of art and fastidious refinement, which might have diverted them from the resistless eloquence of nature, that they owe their superiority over the lettered sons of every age and nation. But, whatever be the skill of the poet, whether that of nature, or art, or of both, this skill is not critically examined into during the representation; it is felt; it no more requires the critic's acumen to capacitate us for this effect, than the philosopher's penetration into nature to feel the lightning. It is not wisdom, but the affectation of it, which in so interesting an hour is attentive to all the finesses, delicacies, and ingenuity of

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of the poet. The ingenuous simplicity of a plain feeling heart is better employed; it is worth a thousand such wise ones; it is the spectator and judge, whom tragedy more delights in, from whom she will receive a more abiding sentence.

Mr. Hume very justly observes, that the force of imagination, the energy of expression, and the power of numbers, are all of themselves naturally pleasing to the mind. But the connection between this position and the following conclusion is wide as heaven and earth, when he adds: that if the object lays hold of some affection, the pleasure still rises upon us, by the conversion of this subordinate moment into that which is predominant. The predominant emotion he assumes to be the pleasure excited by the eloquence of the artist; the affection laid hold upon is the painful sensation of the spectacle. Which of these two emotions is most likely to be predominant has been just now discussed; but that a pleasurable emotion of one kind should lay hold of a painful

emotion

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emotion arising from a very different source, and derive augmentation to itself from this combination, is an extraordinary position; and as contrary to the laws of nature in the moral as in the material world. Whenever contraries act upon each other, diminution and not augmentation is the result. The pain continues to be pain so long as the character of the representation is preserved, and undergoes no conversion at all.—Eloquence, on whatever subject, is pleasing,—but what then? If there were not some other circumstance, some powerful law of our nature which attached us to, and gave us an interest in, a subject highly painful, the pleasure merely arising from the display of talents would be less pleasant, because counteracted every moment by what is painful; it must inasmuch as the pain amounts to be diminished, and if the pain greatly over-balanced the pleasure, it might be entirely obliterated.

He reasons thus himself, when he converts the proposition; observing that, if the pleasure

pleasure arising from the conduct of the representation were not predominant, the effect would be destroyed, and sorrow would absorb the mind. Before the pain had no effect upon the pleasure to destroy any part of it; but, as if it were of the same family, very obligingly ministered to its increase. Mr. Hume has endeavoured to avail himself of an allusion to the well-known laws of motion; but to answer his purpose he has assumed that they resemble two forces moving in different but not opposite directions. But their resemblance is to two forces moving in absolutely contrary directions; the effect of which is, that the greater force continues indeed to move onward in its proper direction, but with a diminution of force equal to that of the lesser.

It is further to be observed, on the theory of Hume, and indeed of both the French philosophers, that the one principle which satisfactorily accounts for the whole phænomenon must be supposed to be admitted. If not, what is meant by the concession of each,

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each, that the objects represented are in their nature painful to the minds of the spectators? And why painful, but from the power of that sympathy which enters into fellow suffering? There is no other principle in man adequate to the effect. If this be not allowed as an overpowering law of human nature, no account can be given, why a being, interested in himself, and averse to pain, should transplant into his own breast the pain of another, and court a partnership with affliction. Mr. Hume may be supposed, though perhaps involuntarily, and while nature, not theory, was speaking, to have conceded something more than this; when he observes that the pleasure, notwithstanding the supposed conversion, wears the features and outward symptoms of sorrow and distress.

Again, if to the eloquence of the poet, as to its proper cause, be ascribed the pleasure, or, to speak more properly, the interest which we take in tragedy; why will not eloquence, employed on other subjects, equally interest and

and captivate us? Why will not pictures of other objects, equally just and animated, equally engage our affections? If it be said that the objects must be in themselves interesting, then the effect is not derived wholly nor principally from the eloquence and manner of the artist, but from some other consideration, which previously interests us in the objects that are represented.

Mr. Hume has very artfully managed his illustration from facts, nor is it to be denied that the principles, to which he ascribes the whole, have their influence. But with less attachment to a preconceived theory, it is, methinks, impossible to avoid the discovery of the great master principle, even in the very facts which he himself adduces.

The notion of conversion, which he borrows from Fontenelle, is an arbitrary assumption; and may be classed with the Cartesian notion of nature's abhorrence of a vacuum. But if, by the delight of being moved be understood, that every passion of the soul delights in its proper exercise; it is true

true that the mind of man will, under the impulse of any affection, be moved towards the object that is united to the affection. And it is also true, that rich imagery, strong expression, the harmony of numbers, and the charms of imitation, are all grateful to the mind, independent of any end to which they are directed. It is to these that certain productions owe all their interest; but they are light auxiliaries in the grander productions of tragedy, unless so far as they are necessary to the perfection of the imitation; without which there is no representation adapted to nature, and therefore nothing fitted to lay hold of the heart.

What Mr. Hume intends by his reference to the deserted parent, is difficult to say; when he asks the question, Who would ever think of it as a good expedient for comforting an afflicted parent, to exaggerate, with all the force of oratory, the irreparable loss which he has met with by the death of a favourite child? Certainly it were a ridiculous part to think of comforting the parent

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by any such means; but the idea of comforting by such a procedure, or the idea of comforting in the thing to be illustrated by this allusion, if any thing be meant to illustrate, are quite out of the question. No one ever conceived the intention of the tragic poet to be, to comfort his audience; he means to distress them; he exerts the utmost force of his genius to distress them; to give them as touching a feeling of the sorrow which he paints, as mere sympathy is capable of receiving. So is it with the deserted parent: he who would ingratiate himself with him cannot take a more effectual means than to catch him in his tenderest moments, and, with all the eloquence of words, expatiate on the virtues, the shining qualities, the promising hopes of his child. Such a conduct would be unkind; it would be cruel; but it would be effectual. He would win the heart of the parent, in the very moment, and by the very act, which was rending it in pieces. It is through the gate of sympathy that he gains this access

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to his heart; the parent embraces the man, in whom he acknowledges a fellow heart, one who appears to feel up to the very height of that sense, which he has himself, of his loss.

I have bestowed, perhaps, more attention on these systems than they may be thought to merit; as, whatever ingenuity they may lay claim to, they have little ground of experiment in human nature to stand upon. But the examination of them has answered the principal purpose. The analysis of their defects discovers in every step the real source of the whole phænomenon; and what is of more importance, it discovers the wise provision of the great author of all for conducting the œconomy of the moral as the material world. But the simplicity of nature offends some; to discover only what every one may discover, and what nature forces upon the notice of all, argues no superiority of genius; they suppose, they invent, they create, and in defiance of nature they erect

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vain monuments of their own wit and ingenuity.

In every view of the human mind, during the exhibition of tragic imitations, compassion, or sympathy, in a more extended sense, presents itself as the operating principle, the immediate sense to which such scenes address themselves. This is the only principle within us, which is sufficient to attach us to misery; to connect a being who is interested for himself, and is in the constant pursuit of his own proper happiness, to connect such a being with the unhappy, and as by an irresistible impulse introduce him to a partnership in their afflictions.

The contradiction, therefore, which this propensity, at the first view, carries with it to a leading principle of our own natures, vanishes when we consider it in this important light; we appear to act in perfect consistence with an acknowledged, and powerful, and highly valuable principle of our natures. While our other senses are continually

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continually opening themselves to their proper objects, it would be strange indeed if this internal sense, whose aim is directed to the noblest character of man, were reluctant to its proper exercise, and averse to those objects, and to those scenes, which immediately address themselves to it. This would argue indeed a defect in his constitution, such as could not easily be reconciled to our ideas of that designing wisdom, which intended him to be one beautiful and harmonious whole.

If, indeed, the end of compassion, as a principle of human nature, were directed only to particular exigencies in human life, as an instant stimulus to acts of kind protection, and humane alleviation of fellow misery, it might be thought sufficient if it were reserved for such interesting occasions; and the mind were not led by a further impulse to the participation of distress, when no immediate object of our benevolent interposition is before us. But compassion was implanted in us with more extensive

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views, not merely that it might come in aid of our good will on pressing occasions, which may justify the pain it gives us; but that, by a more regular and uniform exercise, it might minister to the sublimest virtue of man, and dispose us, on every occasion, to wish and do well to the creature like ourselves.

There is a striking difference in the exercise of this sense, as referred to the real distresses of human life, and to the fictitious ones of tragedy; and this difference is wisely adapted to their respective uses. When we are summoned to immediate action, the sympathetic feeling is pain unmixed, in order to give power and velocity to the benevolent stimulus. We have no propensity, therefore, to such scenes; we do not wish them to exist, in order that our compassion and benevolence may have a field to action; though he who orders, or rather permits them, has wisely provided that the calamities of human beings shall operate to the moral improvement and perfection

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fection of their minds. But where the distress is merely fictitious, or the representation of what is past; and no kind humane interposition is expected from us, but only the cherishing an uniformly benevolent temper may be supposed to be in view; then the pain is mixed and tempered with something that we know not to give a name to, something that must attend on every mind in the exercise of its best affections, a complacence such as a superior spirit may be supposed to feel, if he were viewing the infirmities and distresses of some inferior system. To such scenes, which imply no augmentation of the real calamities of our fellow-creatures, but may minister to the augmentation of our good will towards them, we are moved by an internal impulse; by an impulse which we approve of in reflection, and which those who are little accustomed to reflection do however obey.

In speaking of the affection of the mind to tragic representations, I have adopted the language of the writers I have opposed,

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while I was discussing their theories; and I may myself, in contemplating the impulse to tragical representations, and the complacence in those benevolent affections which are excited, and distinguishing these from the impressions on the heart which the spectacle of pain excites, have used the term pleasure, yet with a visible dubiousness and reluctance, because language immediately suggested no other term; though it by no means corresponded to my idea, nor to the real truth of the sensation. When the mind is but moderately interested in any tragic scene, and has leisure to attend to no other circumstances than what are appropriate to sympathy, it may be sensible to feelings which are in their nature pleasant, but chiefly, if not entirely, springing out of these collateral circumstances. But when the increasing distress of the scene entirely possesses the mind, all semblance of pleasure vanishes, and the feelings are those of pure compassion; but not, unless in some particular instances, painful up to the degree

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gree of aversion. It is not strictly just, therefore, to say, that the feelings at such an instant are in any degree pleasant; as it would be grossly false to say, that we are instigated to this participation of distress by the view of pleasure; unless all the sympathetic feelings be referred to the class of the agreeable ones. We are carried, indeed, by a virtuous impulse to converse with distress; the certainty that we shall not be spectators of any real suffering, withdraws all aversion to this impulse: but under this assurance we surrender ourselves up entirely to the poet; we enter into his views; we are carried out of ourselves into his fictitious scenes, as if they were real. We often feel from them an exquisite pain, which oppresses our minds for a considerable time after the representation is over, and sinks too deeply into those of a delicate and susceptible make. Yet we return to such scenes; not that pain is desirable, nor to seek for pleasure in the field of pain; but the better inclination of our natures determines our conduct; and the

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the distressing sensations, to which we are exposing ourselves, appear with that softened aspect, that grace, which a virtuous and benevolent melancholy always wears.

This investigation of the effect of tragedy on the mind, will account, in a great measure, for the superiority of the best productions of the moderns above those of the ancients, and of the English tragedy above that of the French. The pictures are more exquisitely finished; the characters of the sufferers are more interesting; and more powerfully lay hold on our affections, and plead for our compassion. Domestic life and domestic manners were more gross and undressed among the ancients; the social passions were but half awakened among them; and, therefore, the pictures of domestic happiness are not near so interesting, nor can, to our improved taste, present such rich subjects of compassion. The French tragedies are in this respect also far inferior to the English; wit, gallantry, and philosophic declamation are more displayed than touching

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touching scenes of pure and ingenuous distress. Tragedy, in order to be perfect, ought to be throughout an animated picture; enlivened, enriched by grandeur of sentiment, by every exhibition of mind which is fitted to interest a fellow mind; but still it must be a picture. When this is conducted by a masterly artist, it is then that all yield to the genius of tragedy; we feel that there is an eloquence in the exhibition of virtuous distress, suffering from the incidents of our natures, from the pardonable errors of human judgement, from the follies or vices of others, or under the iron hand of oppression and cruelty, which mocks all the power of wisdom to equal; which the lettered and the polished can no more resist than the most uncultivated child of nature. And this eloquence is the instrument of a wise Providence, whereby he forms and fashions our hearts according to what he designs and approves, and calls forth those benevolent affections which move not at the voice of reason and calm philosophy.

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ESSAY III.

A DEFENCE OF LEARNING AND THE ARTS, AGAINST SOME CHARGES OF ROUSSEAU.

That learning is not the parent of politeness, nor chargeable with the duplicity, fraud, and vice, which he supposes to be her attendants.

IT is a failing, and not of common minds alone, who surrender themselves to the impression of the moment, but also of men from whom a more just appreciation of the past and the present might be expected, to indulge to a spirit of discontent whenever they speak of their own times; and with a kind of holy veneration to fix their eye on those days of old, wherein, as they suppose, ingenuous virtue and sincere enjoyment were alone to be found. This failing, for a failing assuredly it is, has its origin in human nature, and even in the best dispositions

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tions of human nature. Candour forgets the bad, but piously remembers the good, of what is gone. The failings of the dead are buried with them, while their virtues, whatever was attractive and engaging, are rescued from the grave, and acquire new splendour by being separated from every thing that offends. But, while offence lives, it arrests our principal attention; it irritates our tempers; it crosses our pursuits; it provokes our moral indignation; and therefore the vice of the day is the subject of everlasting complaint. But in all this proceeding neither truth nor justice is observed, and without ill intentions we often defeat every good purpose. The good and the bad of every day ought to be fairly stated, and neither candour nor prejudice ought to be heard at the bar of impartial justice. By exaggerated praise or exaggerated blame we give a sanction to folly, to error, and vice, while we throw discouragement on the ingenuous pursuit of wisdom, truth, and virtue.

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In Rousseau we find a striking example of intemperate censure and intemperate praise. The preference of the past to the present, of barbarity to refinement, of ignorance to knowledge, is his favourite theme: it directly or obliquely insinuates itself into all his writings. Barbarity with him is simplicity; it is nature in her pure ingenuous walk; while refinement, taste, and elegance are only the gilding of duplicity, fraud, and vice. To know more than simple nature obtrudes upon us, is only to know the instruments of mischief; it is to awake a temptation, and capacitate man to be the enemy of himself and his fellow man. With a splenetic turn of mind he finds more to offend than please in the whole view around him; with a passion for fame he courts reputation by the singularity of his doctrine, by the boldest contradiction to the common sense of mankind; and with abilities wonderfully fitted to give a grace and a charm even to the grossest absurdities, he ventures on an open hostility to every thing which man

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man conceives to be his highest ornament and praise.

I have observed that this humour of depreciating the present state of man, and overrating that of the past, tinctures most of the writings of Rousseau; but it is the professed object of the celebrated essay to which the academy of Dijon adjudged the prize. He maintains that the progress of society and its boasted improvements have been only to make man progressively acquainted with misery. He charges this crime particularly on the sciences and the arts. "Ancient days, he says, were more virtuous than our own, and the degeneracy of our own days owes its origin to our knowledge." In fine, knowledge or science appears to him to be Pandora's box, replete with every evil. A poor prisoner in a house of lunatics, being asked the cause of his confinement, replied, that he thought the whole world to be mad, while the world thought him to be mad, but unhappily the world outvoted him. Rousseau must have thought,

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if he thought as he wrote, that a mania had possessed man from a very early period, and that in his day this mania had risen to its greatest height. It was well that the question did not come to issue between him and the world, for the world would assuredly have out-voted him. Rousseau is however entitled to a philosophic and argumentative reply.

In the first part of that discourse Rousseau objects to knowledge, that it is the parent of that external civility and politeness, by which the foundations of candour and plain dealing are undermined, and fellow-intercourse becomes constrained and disguised. Before art, says he, had fashioned our manners, imposed concealment on our passions, and taught us to speak a borrowed language, our behaviour, though rustic, was natural. He admits that human nature, at the bottom, might not perhaps be better; but he asserts that men derived security from being able to read each other's thoughts, and that this advantage, of which we now know

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not the value, preserved them from many vices. To this part of his charge the present essay is confined.

In answer to this charge, it is asserted that external civility and politeness are not the offspring of learning or knowledge, but claim other parents; that disguise, borrowed looks and language, and false exhibitions of the heart, are not peculiar to any period or state of man; that sincerity and honesty are not irreconcileable with politeness; and that whatever of evil can be charged to the account of politeness, is amply compensated by the real good which it produces.

Politeness may certainly associate with learning, and may be separate from it; but their first origin is in the good-will and sympathy of man, in the desire of being agreeable in the form as well as in the substance of our fellow-intercourse.

This is so obvious, that it is impossible to discover any special connection of cause and effect between a learned mind and a polite mind. A learned man, without a kind,

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kind and sympathetic heart, without a desire to please, may be as blunt a rustic as Rousseau can contemplate in his golden age of simplicity. Learning is very far from being the character of the polite world, and politeness in a still less degree is the character of the learned world. The weakest persons, to whom literature has not opened her very door, may lead in the dance of fashionable politeness. They are perfectly innocent, poor creatures! of the horrid crime of learning; but they are the arraigned before Rousseau's tribunal, they are the convicts of unmeaning profession, of prostituted language, and of all the idle waste of words. Observe the learned man! He may possibly be polite; he may be courteous in his address, in his speech, in all his manners: but he has not learnt this from his books; he has acquired it from an habitual commerce with the dressed and fashionable world. Such an union of attainments is however a rare spectacle; for, learning abstracted from other circumstances has a contrary tendency, and

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the world is so persuaded of this, that it expresses something like astonishment, if in the acknowledged scholar or philosopher it find the polite man. The love of retirement and even of solitude, as conducive to the pursuits of learned men; the little attraction which they feel for the lighter amusements of life, the straws in their estimation which float upon its surface; the little attention which they have bestowed in order to acquit themselves with propriety and grace; the disgust which is excited in them by the trifling conversation and important nothings of men of the world, render what is called good company as unfit for a philosopher as a philosopher is for good company. What a figure does he often exhibit in a gay and brilliant circle, with his solemn air, his stiffened attitudes, his unmanaged limbs, his absorbed mind, his inattentions, his constrained recollections, his studied expressions, his deep and sententious discourse! He is an object of ridicule to the circle around him; but he knows to estimate himself,

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himself, and he returns the contempt with which he is received. He feels that he is not on his proper ground; no common sympathy attaches him to his company, nor his company to him; each are under restraint; but a modesty yet unsubdued in him subjects him to truly painful feelings, while a happy confidence which the polish of the world often confers, administers to the company the enjoyment of a secret triumph. He retires from the scene without regret, and his absence excites no regret in those whom he has quitted. A few reflections on the strange interview for a while occupy the thoughts of either party. The one laments the littlenesses and follies of which he has been a witness, the others laugh at the awkward mortal for his oddities and unaccommodating wisdom: while the fruit of these reflections differs in each as much as the reflections themselves. The one are strengthened in the persuasion that the accomplishments of politeness are the finishing of the human character, and with

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more self-satisfaction go on in a course, which as a whole is but a waste of time, of talents, and of character. The other owes it perhaps to his keen disgust that he is not swallowed up in the gulf of dissipation, that trifling and unimportant attentions are not over-rated by him, do not debauch his mind, nor lead him to the borders, if not into the open field, of vice. There is certainly an extreme in the judgement of each; but with which extreme the just estimate of character and dignified enjoyment is most likely to be found, might have been left to the Genevan philosopher to calculate.

In fine, learning and politeness may be cotemporaneous events in the history of man, and they may each be derived from their proper source; but they are neither of them the parent of the other, nor do they kindly mix in any relationship or affinity. To derive politeness from learning, and charge to her account the vices of the former, whatever these vices be, merely because learning and politeness may be coexistent,

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is one of those sophisms, which logicians class under the name of *non causa pro causâ*. If the error proceed from design, it is criminal; if it proceed from ignorance, and a confused understanding, it is contemptible in one who pretends to the character of a philosopher, and a censor of the follies of his day.

Learning and civility appear both to be derived from the same circumstances in the condition of man; but if civility be a vice, learning is not to be accused on this account. The field produces the grain and the weed. Is the salutary plant accused, because the useless or even the noxious plant vegetates by its side? As man betters his external condition, multiplies the conveniences of life, his views enlarge, he connects himself more closely with fellow man, he widens his connections and dependencies, and, to accomplish this, his intellect and ingenuity are provoked; his manners also become more insinuating; he courts his fellow by courtesy as well as by kindness; and thus science,

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the arts, urbanity and the agreeable in form, address and intercourse, advance with a step proportionate to the growing interests, utilities and conveniences of life.

This appears to me to be the true origin of learning and civility, considered in a general view, and to account for their cotemporaneous existence in every instance, whenever they have been found to enter into the human character. But learning and civility, though issuing from the same source, and always in some degree accompanying each other in their progress, may vary in their respective character from other circumstances; and therefore it may require the aid of some other cause to account for the peculiar politeness of later Europe, which is the very object of Rousseau's invective. To discriminate the urbanity of Greece and Rome from the politeness of the present century, and to account for whatever is peculiar to and characteristic of the latter, may not therefore be impertinent to the object of the present essay; especially if it shall appear

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pear that learning is as innocent of the guilt, which may be imputed to modern, as to antient manners.

Accurately to define the characters of antient urbanity and modern politeness may be no easy task; nor is this difficulty peculiar to the present subject, as there are many instances, in which we cannot define what we strongly feel. Cicero has given a definition of urbanity, which may apply to the civility of any day, as it is a mere definition of the abstract principle. Had he illustrated it with a familiar instance in the manner of his day, we should have been better able to estimate the standard of Roman urbanity. We have not a history of the private life of the Romans; but from some incidental facts which are recorded, we may decide that their manners were not so dressed and elegant and delicately finished as those of modern Europe. Yet we must allow to Greece and Rome all that polish which answers to their high condition of prosperity and cultivation. The wants of nature are common

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to all, but a richer possession of the external conveniences and accommodations of life cannot fail to awaken an artificial taste, the idea of a grace which may be superadded to every enjoyment. All of the polite and elegant which the collision of man with man can be expected to accomplish, may be ascribed to the higher personages of these antient days: but the influence of woman on manners could not be experienced by them, because woman held not the same rank in society as in these later times; and therefore this must constitute one characteristic feature in which the politeness of the most accomplished periods of Greece and Rome could bear no resemblance to that of modern days. Commerce, wealth, science, arts, and urbanity have made a rapid progress in western Europe, and independent of any other cause must have produced their effects; but the state of woman, which is absolutely novel in the history of man, has given an appropriate character to our manners; it preceded every other cause; it operated

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rated in our rudest and most ignorant periods; it was the originating source, it has been the cradle, it is the highest aspiring of our politeness, and from this is derived whatever is peculiar in the manners of the masculine sex.

It is certain that woman had little estimation in antient times, unless as subservient to a purpose which it becomes me not to name before this assembly; or, as necessary to posterity; or, as the superior œconomists of domestic supply and order. They were passed as a property from the parent to the husband; they were not introduced on the public stage of life; they were even secreted from the open face of day; they were not admitted to the councils of man, to an equal participation of the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows of the lordly male. This, whether it were to the honour or reproach, whether it were the blessing or misfortune, of antient days, was assuredly the character of antient nations, though with some difference of degree; it was that of the Asiatics,

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tics, of the Greeks and Romans, and continues at this day to be the unvaried character of the eastern world. To the rough inhabitants of northern Europe, barbarians, as history affects to call them, but who were our progenitors, the female sex are primarily indebted for their vindication to the equal dignity and privileges of human nature. To this singular character of these northern nations, long unknown to the rest of the world, Cæsar and Tacitus have borne testimony, while they were confined to their native land. The romantic gallantry of the days of chivalry, and the romanzas of the succeeding period, in which it is difficult to decide whether superstition, heroic courage, or idolatry of the sex, be the predominant feature, and the gradual passing of the old romance into the modern novel, all demonstrate that this character has never been parted with, but been mellowed into the more rational and tempered gallantry of the present day, such as we their posterity, the inhabitants of modern Europe, unreluctantly bow

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bow to. If man have imposed chains upon himself, he feels not the weight of them: he is happier in the participation of power and influence with the female, than when he held her under his absolute dominion, when she was the slave of his will, or the passive instrument of his selfish pleasures.

This generous sympathy of our northern progenitors with the partners whom nature and God designed for them, happily coincided with the equal and liberal spirit of Christianity; and to these two powerful agents, which were nearly cotemporary, we owe that wonderful revolution of social and moral sentiment, which constitutes the distinction of later Europe. Woman has now been permitted to resume her proper rank in society, and to her we are greatly indebted for the present polish of ruder man; for that ease, propriety, grace, attention, and desire to please in the manner of every intercourse, which offends the cynic eye of Rousseau. To every thing that is human some accusation may be brought, whether in

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in consequence of defect, excess, or association, and therefore it is not wonderful if politeness committed to the management of men should be subjected to censure; but be her errors and excesses what they will,

Look on her face, and you 'll forgive them all!

To her this generous acknowledgement is due, that she smooths the asperities of life, veils the deformities of selfish vice, and gives to ingenuous virtue and goodness its highest lustre.

I do not mean however in this part of my essay to be the advocate of politeness, but to prove that learning is perfectly innocent of its birth, in modern as well as antient times, and, let its present character be what it will, to fix the filiation upon its proper parents. If it be true that the politeness of modern Europe derives itself from the restoration of woman to her proper rank in society, and that woman is the legislator of politeness, there is a circumstance in the character of woman, which demonstratively proves

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proves the folly of Rousseau in ascribing to learning either the blessings or the curses of politeness. In no day, not even in the present day, has woman been eminently distinguished for learning; and therefore the empire of politeness, sovereign as Rousseau supposes it to be, neither derives itself from, nor is maintained by, learning.

I return to the direct subject of the essay. Having rescued learning from the imputation of politeness; I wish also to rescue politeness from the more odious charge of insincerity and dissimulation, as if they were her necessary and appropriate character. Dissimulation and artifice may and often do assume the attractive form of politeness, but they are not her natural offspring; they have their origin in those interested passions, which are common to man in every age and nation, and which pure and spotless innocence, if it have ever existed on this earth, is alone exempt from. The savage, the rustic and illiterate know to deceive under a fair exterior, whenever a selfish end awakes the desire, and deceive as artfully and

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as successfully as any of the polished and lettered sons of modern Europe. Instructed by mere interest, they can adopt even a seducive address, and in the very form of their natural simplicity and bluntness they can still more successfully deceive.

Uncultivated society has its virtues, it has its vices also, of which none hold a more distinguished rank than art, deceit, deliberate fraud, and imposture. The history of the Arabians, Tartars, North-Americans, and Chinese, who are at best only managed and disciplined savages, is much more the history of lying and imposture than of plain truth and honesty. They can practise insinuating address, they can mislead with deep designs, and deceive with fatal success. In their national treaties they can shroud their intentions with as artful concealment as the most lessoned adept of our diplomatic schools. With war in their hearts, they can send an ambassador of peace, out of whose breast not the shrewdest politician of Europe can dig the secret. In war, they are treacherous more than brave; stratagem and ambuscade

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ambuscade constitute their military tactics, and they measure their triumphs, not by the manly resistance which as men they have overcome, but by the insidious violation of faith, by springing upon their destined prey in all the confidence of security, by their merciless use of an inglorious victory, and the undistinguishing massacre of age and sex.

In this representation I may be supposed to exhibit the portrait only of the North-American tribes; but the history of every rude and uncivilized nation presents the same features; and in this very century the Chinese, whom I have not excepted from the class of barbarians, have exhibited a dreadful specimen of this insidious, unmanly, and savage character. The late emperor of China, jealous of a numerous and powerful Tartar horde, and, if I remember aright, one of the very tribe from which himself was descended, allured them by faithless promises, till he had drawn around them a cordon of his numerous hosts. Then, in the true spi-

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rit of a savage, he issued the word, and appeased his fears by putting them all to the sword. He exterminated nearly three millions of human beings at a blow.

Such are the representatives of the native simplicity and innocence of undressed man; such are the patterns of frankness, sincerity and manliness, to whom Rousseau offers the incense of an almost idiot praise, in comparison to whom the European character is one uniform blot. He rivals the papal power in its greatest plenitude; he blackens an angel, and whitens a devil.

But if, contrary to fact, and what the history of man in the progress of society reports to the plain inquirer after truth, it should be allowed that politeness derives itself immediately from learning, yet learning is not therefore to be charged with that duplicity and dissimulation, which in the practice of politeness has excited the indignation of Rousseau. Politeness in its primary designation presents a fair and amiable character; but, like every blessing to man, vice may seize

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seize the blessing, and, as far as vice can operate, may convert the blessing to a curse. Has learning taught to vice this lesson? If this be a truth, it presents a novel idea of learning, contrary to every idea which has been entertained of her genius and spirit; for before the Genevan philosopher was pleased to undeceive man, she was supposed to be favourable to truth, to the discovery and to the ingenuous communication of truth.

What gave to the openings of science that charm, which roused man from the indolence and torpor of savage life, but that it ministered to this native love of truth in the mind of man, to that ardour of a rational mind, which, when awakened, pursues with avidity and with unsated gratification the discoveries which Nature unfolds to the diligent inquirer? This is the spirit and genius of learning, and most unlikely to have inspired the wily arts of polished life.

The question is not, therefore, whether politeness, and even learning, may not be

seized by vicious men, and perverted to vicious purposes, but whether it be of their genius and character to favour this abuse. The question is, whether politeness be not of a virtuous origin; whether it be not this very circumstance which recommends her to vice; whether science, whose object is truth and the communication of truth, can intend disguise, deceit and perfidy. Vice exists.—Granted. Let the crimination be carried to the baser passions, which originate vice of whatever form, but not to those laudable passions of man, which contemplate truth and kindness.

How many other blessings does vice pervert and abuse? From the Creator of man is derived the very capacity of learning, the impulse to, the delight therein, and all that is the genuine offspring of learning. If learning is to be accused, because vice may prostitute learning itself, and whatever is the progeny of learning, to uses which the generous spirit of learning abhors; then *à fortiori*, the Creator is to be accused, who has

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has inspired in man the desire and the capacity of learning; nor is there one gift, nor one blessing for which we may not with equal justice reproach our Maker, as there is not one gift nor one blessing which vice may not, and unfortunately does not, equally misapply. It is not of the genius of learning and wisdom to favour vice in any of its forms; science and virtue are naturally allied, and to the sons of learning the world is indebted for the most animated and persuasive pleas in the cause of virtue; that the wisdom of her ways has been illustrated; and that vice has been proved to be as foolish as it is detestable. To learning this is an easy, a pleasant, and a natural office; while all attempts to press her into the service of vice, have reflected disgrace and infamy on the perpetrators of so rude a violation. However individual men may pervert the plan of their Maker, science and virtue are united in the service of man, as wisdom and holiness in the conduct of the Divine Being. I make no apology for this

momentary use of the style of the theologist; it becomes me as a philosopher, who demands for theology a place in the great philosophy of nature. He who designed man, designed science and wisdom to be of the highest attributes of his being, and to traduce them, is to traduce both man and God.

But to the innocence of learning, as not answerable for the duplicity and fraud and dishonesty, which Rousseau charges upon politeness, it may be further added to its praise, that if any thing can guard a man against the impositions of dissembling address and language, it is to the cultivation of the intellect that he must be especially indebted for this guard. Learning places a man upon a higher ground; it confers upon him the advantages of superior intelligence; and when directed to the judgement of character, and assisted by an acquaintance with men, their objects, their modes, and varied import of language, it acquires a kind of intuition into the very heart. A scientific

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man is so accustomed to yield conviction only to evidence, that he is rescued from that precipitate decision which is the pit of fools; he is possessed of more nice discernment, more accuracy in weighing every thing in the scale of sober judgement, more facility in resolving, combining, comparing, deciding; so that if imposture must haunt the best walks of life, no man can pass these walks with more security than the well-educated and well-informed man. I do not ascribe this praise to the verbal critic, the mere mathematician, or the simple sciolist of any form; but to him, who has studied man as well as books, which alone deserves the name of true science. And it is to this science that Rousseau's accusation can alone apply; for the learned only, who mix with men, can give to imposture those advantages, which he supposes learning to furnish. It is but in a small degree that learning and politeness can aid the dishonest and the knave; but it is in a very high degree that learning and a polished acquaintance with

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men can protect against the knave. I might illustrate the truth of this observation by an appeal to very striking facts, facts of the greatest magnitude and importance. Since the study of literature and the study of man have united to enlighten the mind, to give to it more intuition and vigour, false taste, false philosophy, false religion, and, I may add, false politics, have lost their power of fascination. True science, like Ithuriel's spear, when applied to Satan in the guise of an angel, has compelled them to unveil, and stand forth to view in their naked deformity.

Having rescued learning from the imputation of politeness, it is an act of justice to rescue politeness from the imputation of insincerity and dishonesty, which Rousseau supposes to be her necessary attendants.

Every virtue and excellence of man invites a counterfeit, which assumes an honoured name, and tricks herself out in a respected garb and form, but has nothing within of the loveliness and worth of the original.

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original. It is thus that for a while, and for ever with the ignorant and the credulous, superstition may be mistaken for religion, the traitor for the patriot, the sycophant for the friend, the seducer for the lover, and the hypocrite for the honest man. But the fraud is discovered; and while the imposture sinks into irredeemable contempt and infamy, the solid virtue remains unimpeached, and acquires renewed splendour from the odious contrast. Thus it is with politeness; her origin is honourable; her foundation is firm; her seat is in the heart; her range of action is the whole intercourse of man; but her favoured residence is the breast of woman; woman, who with

Love in her eye, and grace in all her walk,

was designed to allure, to attract, to scatter roses on all the paths of life.

Such as is woman in her best character, such is politeness. She visits undressed, uncultivated man; in her whole intention, in her whole manner she is kind. The rugged-

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ness of manners is smoothed under her steps, her smiles calm the turbulence of passion, and man is not allowed to approach man but in the form and language of kindness. The ingenuously honest and good embrace her in sincerity; the designing and bad have no access but in her name, and their hypocrisy is so far from being to her dishonour, that it is the homage which even vice finds itself obliged to render to her excellence and worth.—But to quit the poetic style, which is not natural to me, the truth assuredly is, that politeness has not in her contemplation to furnish a language for the insincere and dishonest; her intention is in the less important and ordinary intercourses of human beings, which singly seem of small worth, but altogether make up the sum and mass of social enjoyment, to intermix those little sweet courtesies, which give a grace, a charm, an acceptableness to every thing. She is therefore of the family of good-will and benevolence, and he who cannot separate her genuine character and

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spirit from the abuses which have attached themselves to her, deserves not the name of a philosopher, and hardly the name of a man. These abuses, however, like most incidental evils, have provided their own correction. The ordinary forms and language of politeness have their appreciated value; they pass for no more than they are worth; while the higher value of the heart, of which politeness was designed to be the agreeable expression, is estimated by more accurate and certain tests.

I may add to what I have already observed in opposition to the magnified evil of a polished language, that there is something in ingenuous truth and honesty, which cannot be counterfeited, and which no artful language can convey. In a greater degree than is imagined does the mouth speak from the heart, and therefore along with what is common to truth and to imposture, to simplicity and to art, there is something which discriminates the one from the other; there is a reserve, a modesty, a delicacy in the one;

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one; a prurience, a boldness and a grossness in the other, which constitute a marked distinction of character, and tell the truth to a discerning world. Sure there must be an angel of detection, which follows the dissembler in his path, and compels the dishonest and designing to reveal the precious secret which they would hide. It is certainly the interest of the impostor to appear to be the perfect character which he assumes; but not all his practice in the art, not all the cool deliberation of his plan, not all his knowledge of the world, aided by genius and by learning, can enable him perfectly to act the part, which it is his interest to personate. Truth cannot betray itself, for, having nothing to conceal, it has nothing to betray; but art has, and therefore cannot guard every avenue of detection; in the very texture of its art it cannot present any thing like the simple and beautiful work of nature. Innocence and guilt are essentially different in their nature, and so in a great degree is their appearance, in spite

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spite of a general conformity of exterior. The artful courtezan cannot personate the inimitable simplicity, ease and grace of the untainted female.

In fine, vice must be allowed to exist in the polished and the learned world, and perhaps in more multiplied forms than in ruder and ignorant periods, though with less deformity and horror. But conceding this, it is still a truth, that whatever be the moral reproach of any day, learning and politeness are not the cause, and they are still a real blessing to the nation which possesses them. I may sum up their praise in a few words;—they add to the acceptableness of real worth and goodness, they lessen the deformity of vice, and on the whole contribute largely to the melioration of society, to the general stock of human comfort and happiness.

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ESSAY IV.

A DEFENCE OF LEARNING AND THE ARTS, AGAINST SOME CHARGES OF ROUSSEAU, *continued.*

That luxury and corrupt manners are not the progeny of science and the arts,—in answer to Rousseau.

In the same celebrated essay to which the Academy of Dijon adjudged the prize, Rousseau aggravates the charge against science and the arts, by imputing to them the introduction of luxury and a general corruption of manners. In this I do not scruple to charge upon him the same confused and illogical understanding as in the former accusation. If he find but a cotemporaneous existence of two facts, he hastily concludes that the one is the cause of the other. Now as an argument is deemed to be bad, which concludes too much, so a rule of assigning a special

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a special cause to an effect ought to be considered as bad, which infers too much. He might, if he had pleased, and he ought, whether he had pleased or no, to have observed a multitude of other characters to be coexistent with luxury, such as law, political science, philosophy natural and moral, christianity, deism, atheism; and for aught that I can observe of a connexion of cause and effect in what he has assigned, he might by the same rule, and with equal propriety, have referred to any one or to all of these conjointly, the introduction of luxury and that corruption of manners, which is opposed to simplicity.—Sir Isaac Newton has in physics established this rule of judging of cause and effect, that, where two phænomena are invariably found to be coexistent, and where the disappearance of the one is instantly attended with the disappearance of the other, and the re-introduction of the one withdrawn is immediately followed with the re-appearance of the other, and so uniformly in every instance; we may then safely conclude

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clude that there is a connection of cause and effect between these phænomena. But this rule of judging is only meant to be applied where the *actus operandi* and the *modus operandi* are concealed from our view. Now no one can pretend, that if learning generate luxury, the very act, and the whole operation, can be concealed from our observation, as in the history of natural causes. It is incumbent therefore on any one, who criminates learning as the operating cause of luxury, to state in clear terms and agreeably to obvious experience, the will, the act, and the history in the production of luxury by learning. This Rousseau has failed to do, and this every one will fail to do, who shall be hardy enough to make the attempt.

But admitting that the rule of Sir Isaac Newton is equally applicable to the discovery of moral as of natural causes, which perhaps it is, though the application be unnecessary; yet Rousseau would derive no advantage from the concession, for his conclusion would fail if examined by the test to

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which the guarded mind of this sagacious philosopher has subjected his rule. The phænomena of learning and luxury are not always united, nor, having been previously united, is the disappearance of learning always followed by the disappearance of luxury. Let the court of Caligula, of Nero, of Heliogabulus, the Asiatic monarchies, and many other striking examples in antient and modern history make the reply. The truth is, there is nothing in the character of learning, which inclines her to luxury, but there is much that is unfavourable and averse to it. The Antonines were learned princes, particularly Aurelius, and they were equally eminent for temperance and moderation, for sober and chaste manners. A learned man may indeed be luxurious, but instances of this mixed character are singular; for learning does not smile upon luxury, nor is luxury propitious to learning.

Luxury is a general term, and answers to very different standards in different minds and in different circumstances. What a

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cynic would call luxury, a more correct judge of manners would denominate taste and elegance. But it is to the praise of learning that taste and elegance are of her progeny; if not, it is a vice in the most learned of all beings, that he has embellished his creation with such a profusion of beauty and elegance, and exhibited to us those perpetual models, which according to Rousseau have misled man.—The Genevan philosopher finds luxury and corrupt manners in learned nations alone. But with a more discerning eye, and a less prejudiced mind, he would have found them with equal excess, and with equal or more deformity, in rude and illiterate nations. The feast of a Kamschadale or an Esquimaux on a whale, a bear, or an otter, is a true and proper luxury, and marked with as intemperate indulgence as the rich and varied board of Lucullus or Apicius. The mind is of the same character in both; they differ only in external circumstances and condition being changed, but the mind unaltered, Apicius

would have been the Esquimaux. The corrupt manners of the Otaheitans have not been surpassed, nor perhaps equalled, by any of the learned nations, to whom the unfriendly eye of Rousseau is directed. Minds more surrendered to effeminate luxurious ease and every lust have not been exhibited in the page of history; and yet these are an unlettered people, and strangers to the arts which have vitiated modern Europe. They know not this wicked thing called learning, which has brought in luxury and all prostitute manners like a flood upon us; nor those arts, which have been the panders of this luxury and corruption.

Rousseau seems to feel the difficulty of fixing immediately upon learning the crime of luxury and its corrupt attendants; but he is more at home when he refers them directly to the arts, which he supposes to be the offspring of learning. Now in this statement, and in the first hasty view of it, there does appear to be a connection between luxury and the arts, and between the arts and learning.

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learning. But the first view of a subject is not always the true one, and there will be found in this, as in the former instance, the same inaccuracy, the same confused understanding, the same unfounded presumptions, the same illegal conclusion.

That luxury and very corrupt manners may exist without the arts, has already appeared from what has been noticed in some of the rudest and most uncivilized nations, to whom may be added the Turks and the Moguls, examples of notoriety and magnitude, who from the commencement of their empires to the present day have been singularly hostile to science and the arts, but not hostile to luxury and the corrupt manners, which are justly supposed to be in her train. A nation ignorant of and unexperienced in the arts will and must, in proportion as it is possessed of the means, be luxurious and corrupt. Indolent ease finds the mind vacant to luxury and lust; this is in the constitution of human nature, and is verified in the constant history of national and in-

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dividual man. A field of active exertion is therefore provided for man as his refuge; it gives a better direction to his mind; it arouses him from that listless repose, in which he has nothing to brood upon but the indulgence of his appetites and lusts, to which in such a state he is so prone, and which in such a state are almost necessary to support the burthen of existence. Hunting and war alone can rouse the savage to action, and then he is more temperate and abstemious than the philosopher or the hermit. The inexhausted allurements of scientific pursuit or the activity of the arts provide a more constant and salutary refuge to a civilized and wealthy nation from their devouring passions and lusts.

Science and the arts are therefore more properly the moral friend and guardian of man; they may minister to some of the productions which a luxurious and corrupt mind seizes upon, but they are innocent of the misuse, they neither suggest nor favour the misuse. The earth itself produces a very

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very considerable part of the food of luxury. Is the earth to be accused as the criminal minister of luxury? The earth and science and the arts are all liberal in their gifts to man; these gifts are in their nature directed to utility and to blessing; they are in the reach of the virtuous and the vicious; virtue enjoys them in their proper character; vice converts them into a curse. To maintain the theory of Rousseau, the earth and science and the arts should be more sparing in their gifts, and all the virtue which his theory aspires to is the impossibility of being vicious. The earth and the arts resemble each other in the variety and richness of their produce, and in not directing nor answering for the use to which their productions shall be applied. But to science are annexed mind and will, and to the deliberate mind and will of science cannot be charged one approbation of abuse, excess, intemperance, luxury, or licentious, corrupt and profligate manners.

There is therefore no natural, no neces-

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sary connection between the arts and luxury or vice. The productions of the arts are illustrious monuments of human ingenuity, and in no small degree imitative of the superior productions of the great artist; they are in their nature innocent of all criminal construction and tendency; they are much more applicable to virtue and to happiness than to vice and misery; luxury and corruption may exist without them, and therefore it is to other parents and to other causes that we must refer their existence and progress.

If luxury do not derive herself from the arts, however the arts may be violently forced into her service, learning is acquitted of the charge, though the arts should be allowed to be the progeny of learning. For learning, no more than God, is to be interdicted and accused in her most honourable walk, of contributing to the ornament, utility and happiness of man, because vice may seize upon and misuse her gifts. But the argument of Rousseau is even more unfounded

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founded in the supposed connection between learning and the arts, for the arts do not perhaps at all derive themselves from learning as their source, and in their progress derive a very inconsiderable part of their utmost improvement therefrom.

The elements of the arts, and many of the most valuable discoveries on which the practice of the arts depends, are derived from unlearned men, or are traced up to unlearned and, what at this day we call, barbarous periods. Who can name the learned day, in which the lever, the moveable pulley, the wheel, the inclined plane, and the screw have been introduced to the knowledge and to the use of men? The arch, the pillar, the roof, and much perhaps of the stability, proportion and ornament of architecture, are probably indebted for their first conception to unlearned and unscientific men. The Greeks do not appear to have considered the Persians as a lettered and scientific nation, and though the vanity of the Greeks may render them very justly suspected

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pected in their estimate of foreign merit, yet it is probable that in this instance they erred not much from the truth. But the ruins of Persepolis present the idea of a structure, which might have rivaled the proudest monument of Grecian architecture. They are at this day the admiration of European artists, to whose judgement and taste the highest deference is paid. To rude ancestors we owe the first idea of a ship, and no inconsiderable progress to that complex and wonderful state in which it now exists. To the Greeks and Romans in their more rude and unlearned state we are indebted, if a debt it may be deemed, for the discipline, the order, the combinations, the evolutions and the general tactics of war; nor, unless perhaps in the application of gunpowder, has all the science and ingenuity of the moderns much surpassed them in this dangerous art. The practice of astronomy, though without a sufficient knowledge of its theory, yet founded on principles derived from an observance of the motion of the planetary bodies,

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dies, is of very remote antiquity, and has been applied with considerable accuracy by nations of no scientific character, and but in a moderate degree removed from barbarism. If a simple elementary language, wherein from a few characters infinite combinations are formed, be a necessary instrument to the progress of science, the Chinese can have no pretensions to the character of a learned nation, although for no other reasons this attribute should be refused to them. For as language is the vehicle of ideas, how slow must be the progress of literary improvement, where only to know the language itself requires the application of a whole life. Yet on the first visit of the Europeans the Chinese were found to be possessed of the elements of almost all the arts, those very elements, which under the culture of the more ardent European have so exalted him amongst men. The same may be observed of the Mexicans and Peruvians, who had no form of written language whatever. The date of their empires was indeed com-

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comparatively of yesterday, but at the period of their highest improvement they could support no claim to the character of learned nations. Yet many of their productions of art, magnificence and taste, were objects of admiration to the more improved European. The practical principles of chemistry have been known, and successively acted on, by many of the rudest and most ignorant nations of the earth, and the communication of some of their processes would be a valuable acquisition to the European artist of the present day. Indeed, without disparagement to the present state of scientific improvement, it must be acknowledged that the valuable arts of mechanics and chemistry have been indebted for discoveries of high estimation to rude and unlettered practitioners, which had eluded all the penetration of the theoretic artist. The fact appears to be, that mere accidental observation, excited by the continually working hand of nature, and agreeably to those eternal laws which govern her operations, has revealed to man, in

in every state and condition, the fundamental principles of all the arts; that they are thus brought home to his very feeling, and that, the discovery being made, the necessities and interests of man seize the discovery, and apply it to his use. Man, in a state of literary culture, digests these experimental discoveries, compares them, reasons upon them, and reduces them into an orderly and harmonious system, which is without doubt of great assistance, in applying the practice of the arts to progressive improvement and utility. Sensible of this truth, the ingenious theorist will acknowledge that the arts, in the whole extent of their subservience to the use of man, have derived their richest treasures from the discoveries and operations of rude and unlearned men.

Rousseau therefore fails in every view in which it can be attempted to fix the odium of luxury and its concomitant vices upon learning. There is no necessary connection between the arts and luxury; and the arts, in

in what degree they may be required to minister to luxury, ask little, very little, aid from learning.

Perhaps Rousseau had no view to honest truth in this celebrated essay, but by a bold singularity to raise himself into general notice. Had truth been his object, he could not have avoided to observe, what must strike the common mind, that the appetites and tastes of men are the parents of luxury, and that wealth, or a supply of what wealth purchases, is the nurse of luxury. Wherever or whenever these two are found to be coexistent, luxury in a greater or less degree will be found to exist also. These may be co-existent, and to any extent, and have so existed, without any thing of what answers to the scientific arts of modern Europe.

ESSAY

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ESSAY V.

SEQUEL TO THE DEFENCE OF LEARNING AND THE ARTS, AGAINST SOME CHARGES OF ROUSSEAU.

In my former observations on the celebrated Essay of Rousseau, I was aware that I had not adverted to all the accusations which he had brought against literature, science, and the arts; but diffident of myself, whether I should ever resume the subject, I took no notice at the time of the omission. The fit has however returned upon me, and with the good pleasure of the Society, I present to them my reply to his remaining charges against those productions of the human mind, which, unless by Rousseau, have been held in the highest estimation.

To those crimes of which poor literature is accused by him, and to which I have already replied, this farther charge is added; that

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that knowledge is favourable to slavery.—"Science, learning, and the arts," he says, "spread garlands of flowers over the chains "with which they are loaded, stifle the senti-"ments of original liberty with which we are "born, and make us in love with slavery." Here the very terms, if we rightly understand their meaning, furnish the confutation of the charge. For, if liberty be stifled, and by liberty be understood the liberty of mind, where are we to look for the science and the learning which are to spread their garlands of flowers over the chains which tyranny imposes on men? Science and learning cannot possibly exist, where tyranny has for any length of time been triumphant; as, I think, it must be conceded, that science, with every thing kindred to it, requires an unfettered mind. The truth is, that tyranny destroys both learning and mind; she knows no enemy so formidable as freedom of mind, and when she decrees its death, she decrees the death of genius. In the

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the commencement of tyranny, the genius, which had flourished under liberty, may have a short respite, but it is sure to experience a rapid decline. Tacitus, who was, at least, as good a judge as Rousseau, felt this truth, and pathetically laments it. In some degree it may be said, that in himself he exhibited a proof of that injury, which pure and elegant literature must suffer from the oppression of tyranny. For though in vigour of mind, and energy of expression, he was excelled perhaps by no one, yet something of that barbarism of language, which is sure to accompany the decline of genius, appears even in this interesting writer. We find not in him that chastity and purity of style, which distinguished the preceding age. Whoever will compare Sallust with Tacitus must be sensible of this, and the comparison is the more just, as in every other character they remarkably approach each other. His example is also in another view singularly opposed to the theory of Rousseau, as we owe even a Tacitus to a temporary gleam of

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liberty. With Trajan liberty and learning may be said to have expired. Tacitus was nearly the last, as he certainly was the brightest ray of that expiring genius, which the better days of Rome had fostered.

But the history of literature under the tyranny of the Roman emperors is not a solitary proof, that genius cannot live without the encouraging smiles of liberty. The history of every age and nation proclaims the same truth, nor can it possibly be otherwise. It is founded in the very nature of man. When God made man, and conferred upon him the gift of mind, he conferred it freely, graciously, and without restraint; he subjected the world to it as a field, wherein it should expatiate at pleasure; and as if this were not enough to exercise its powers, and fill up the immensity of its desires, he gave to him imagination, whereby to create ideal worlds, and shadow to himself something more beautiful, more graceful, and more perfect, than what even this wonderful universe presents to his view. Man is not restrained

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strained even in the estimate of God himself; his perfections, providence, laws, and government are weighed in the scale of human judgment.—Is this the character of mind? Is this freedom designed for it by its Maker, as the soil wherein alone it can grow and flourish? And can a vain theorist hope to persuade us, that this is all a dream; that mind, and vigorous mind, can be brought to delight in slavery; that science, which is the grand object and result of mind in all its bold excursions, can be friendly to oppression, can welcome the very restraint, which is abhorrent to its nature, and destructive of its being? If fact were not in contradiction to so wild and unauthorised an assertion, yet the mere supposition would be revolting to the immediate feeling of man. The author could not, methinks, believe what he wrote, or rather perhaps belief was out of the question. Belief is the province of the vulgar; it is the privilege of certain superior geniuses to sport with their credulity,

dulity, and impose the wildest extravagancies on their simple understandings. To say therefore common things, and utter common truths, would excite no surprise; while to be eccentric, to make the world stare, appears to be the only object for which some men write, to which we owe a Hume, a Voltaire, and a Rousseau. Had the writer, whom I am impleading, but condescended to look on a map of the world as adapted to his own or to any day, he must have perceived, that wherever tyranny is absolute, and every thing is subjected to the apprehensive caprice of the tyrant, genius is dead; that in proportion as tyranny dominates, genius is depressed; and that wherever law and a sense of hereditary liberty impose a rule even on tyranny, genius more or less expands itself. A mind accustomed to reflection and investigation cannot in the range of its discursive knowledge be ignorant of the rights of human nature, and thence must derive a tone and energy, which will

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ill brook a tame submission to the yoke. Expanded knowledge generates heroes, not slaves.

The times of slavery are remarkably the times of ignorance and barbarism; but soon as the torch of learning pierces through the gloom, the demon flies, and generous liberty with all her smiling train revisits the haunts of men. From the Mediterranean to the extremities of China and Japan liberty is extinguished, and genius has not even a name. Nor have three centuries passed, since all Europe was enslaved. A power bearing in its front another world, but in its heart the lust of this alone, had gradually acquired a dominion little less extensive than that of Imperial Rome, but more absolute and oppressive than any despotism had ever exhibited. And how was this absolute dominion over men at length attained? By inducing a Scythian darkness, by debasing man, by leaving to him no more knowledge than that of the brute, in order to render him tame and pliant to the yoke. Whether

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through a remissionof this wise, but diabolical policy, or from other causes, letters insinuated themselves; man was incited to think; the powers of reason were rekindled; knowledge like a new day broke in upon him; reflection awakened the long dormant sense of his native dignity; and the mighty fabric of ecclesiastic tyranny, which ten centuries had been consolidating, was in a few years shaken to its base. In Spain and Portugal Liberty and Literature have to this hour but a feeble and dubious existence, while in Italy, Germany, and France they have found a welcome, which has cherished them in no small degree. But this is accompanied with restraints and oppressions, which are unfavourable to both, and fatal to their grandest and most laudable exertions. Under the dominion of the Bourbon princes though monarchy was ascendant, nor any security for civil liberty existed, yet from the influence of immemorial laws and usages, power was obliged to observe a decency and caution. Within certain limits therefore

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therefore mind was allowed a freedom beyond what could have been expected from the natural jealousy of power, and more than experience has proved to be consistent with the preservation of that power. Monarchy in France has passed into a despotism, which having more to fear, because it is novel, and has not an hereditary succession for its basis, will probably not allow to mind so free a range. It appears to me, that literary genius has already experienced a sensible decline, and has totally quitted all her more dignified walks. The state of civil liberty and the state of literary mind in France has always appeared to be an anomaly in the history of man. One solution of this difficulty has already been noticed, to which may be added this very important consideration. Of all the Catholic countries ecclesiastic tyranny has had the least ascendancy in France. The peculiar claims of the Gallican church happily extricated the nation from the most merciless oppression of the papal power. The Inquisition, that deadliest

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enemy to every thing manly and liberal, was never permitted to enter France. The benefits of such an exemption must have been incalculable. Abhorring and rejecting the most oppressive weight, mind must act with comparative energy, must appear in the characters both of intellect and liberty, the civil power itself must in some degree partake of the generous contagion, and in a greater degree be awed into a decent compliance with the national temper. This circumstance so favourable to France applies with equal force to Germany, and with a greater force since the peace of Westphalia, which rescued nearly one half of that extensive region from the very profession of the papal religion. Every thing was different in Portugal and Spain, and a sadly different issue has been the fate of these unhappy countries. The papal power and the Inquisition had with them established an uncontrolled dominion, and subjected even the throne itself, of which a memorable instance was exhibited in the 18th century.

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The king of Spain then reigning was present at one of their auto da fès. Being young, and better nature not extinguished in him, he betrayed symptoms of compassion for the sufferings of the unhappy victims, whom the flames were slowly consuming. The inquisitors were alarmed, the royal tear was deemed to have vitiated the holy sacrifice, and as an atonement the monarch was sentenced to penance and humiliation the most disgraceful. His shoulders were bared, and he was whipped by the grand inquisitor; after which a vein in his arm was opened, and the blood that issued was thrown into the fire with a solemn anathema, as accursed. The Inquisition has since been humbled, but not destroyed. It still exists with all its terrours, but they are under the direction of the sovereigns of Spain and Portugal, and are become a dreadful instrument of civil despotism. Happy England! which has found the nice and delicate medium between tyranny and anarchy, which has preserved as much of civil liberty

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liberty as is consistent with civil order, where the illiberal restraint of mind is removed, intellect ranges free and unconfined, and genius has acquired a strength, a penetration, and a grandeur, to which no age or nation has ever yet aspired. The ostentatious display of a light and flimsy something like to genius may surround a despotic throne, chiefly employed in servile adulation; and the arts may lend their aid in the exhibition and decoration of pageant shows to attract the gaze of the multitude, and divert their thoughts from the pressure of their bondage. But a more absurd idea never entered the mind of man, more abhorrent to nature and experience, than that the learning or the arts, which have either dignity or utility to recommend them, should be friendly to slavery. The just conclusion is, that as slavery advances, learning retires, and that liberty rests upon the firmest seat, when genius and learning rear a throne for her support.

I proceed to answer another accusation of Rousseau,

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Rousseau, that simple knowledge brings us acquainted with many vices and crimes, which we should otherwise be totally ignorant of; and therefore that ignorance, inasmuch as morals are the object, is more desirable than knowledge. As this charge is of the same family with his former one, that knowledge and arts are the parents of luxury, to which I have replied in the preceding volume of your Memoirs, it will be almost unavoidable that my answers to both shall have a considerable resemblance.—Knowledge brings us acquainted with new crimes, ignorance therefore, in a moral view, is preferable to knowledge! In every view that I have taken of this once celebrated essay of the Genevan philosopher, I can see little, if any thing, beside a rich imagination, and a brilliant expression, which could gain to it so much celebrity. If with these alone he seduced his judges in a cause of truth and morals, he exhibited in the very act a more striking proof of the dangerous influence of lettered genius than any which he has

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brought forward in his essay. The position, that knowledge introduces us to the acquaintance with new crimes, from which he infers, that in a moral view ignorance is preferable to knowledge, is either not true at all, or in so trifling a degree, as to render the amount of the inference of very little consideration. But if the position were admitted in the fullest extent, the inference would still be inadmissible, because it would argue only a very low and contemptible idea of man; the mere negation of vice, but not at all the presence of virtue, the very essence of which consists in the knowledge of vice, and a magnanimous resistance to it. But let us discuss the truth of the assertion.

I will ask you then, Does it require a mind cultivated by science to be acquainted with the horrid crimes of theft, plunder, murder, or with the meaner crimes of dissimulation, lying, treachery? In truth, I know of no crime, which could be unknown in any state of man, except in that of absolute solitude. The modes and perhaps the extent

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extent of crime may vary in different states and conditions of men, but every crime, of which man is capable, will be found in its essential character, in rude as well as cultivated and polished life. The question however at present is not what variation a cultivated state of society may induce in the manner or in the extent of a crime, but strictly whether increasing knowledge generates new crimes. If this position be true, these new crimes ought to be specifically stated. Lax and vague declamation may so fascinate the understanding, as to persuade us that new and unheard of monsters are brought forward on the active stage of human life; but if you demand, that a definite body and a name be assigned to them, you will find that they are no other demons, than have played their tricks in every period and stage of society, and that in the history of vice there is nothing essentially new under the sun. It is not necessary in this part of the reply to compare the state of crime in an ignorant and rude with that of a learned

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learned and polished period. This has already been considered at some length, and the balance appeared to be not a little in favour of the latter period. It is a topic which has divided the judgment, and interested the passions of men in every day, and therefore to guard against crude and hasty decisions, I would add the following observations to what has been already presented to you.—A cultivated state of man is always more populous than the one, which approaches to the rude and savage, such as Rousseau contemplates and praises. Where therefore there are more actors, supposing the moral form of the public mind to be only the same, the number of criminals must be greater, but the proportional state of crime will be equal; and may in any degree be less in a polished period, if the moral influence of an enlightened mind be admitted. This admission would indeed be in direct opposition to Rousseau's theory, but it was asserted as the just claim of knowledge in the preceding part of my reply.—

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It is also the character of a cultivated period, that man is more active, more elicited into public view, and vice being in its very nature forward and obtruding, what vice man has will be more known, more observed, and excite more disgust and indignation. The quantity of virtue, which is modest and retired, will be almost equally unknown in every state of society, but the quantity of vice is and must be more known in that busy and active state, where man is constantly as it were on a public stage, and exposes himself to his fellow in so many new and interesting movements.

Let this suffice as a reply to Rousseau's assertion, that knowledge generates new crimes, absolutely unknown in a ruder state. There is nothing in the nature of man which gives credibility to the assertion, and of consequence the whole of this charge is dismissed with contempt. But if the position were true without any limitation, yet the inference would not follow, that in a moral view, ignorance is more desirable than knowledge.

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knowledge. Virtue cannot exist without the knowledge of vice, and in whatever degree vice is unknown, that is, has no correspondent idea in the mind, the virtue which is opposed thereto will be unknown also. Indeed it would appear as if through the whole of this essay, Mr. Rousseau contemplated only the paradise of fools; that blessed state, in which from pure ignorance there could be neither saint nor sinner. That Rousseau meant to insult the human understanding by obtruding this idea, that in order to be virtuous, it is enough that from ignorance we be absolutely incapable of vice, is a supposition which reflects severely on Rousseau, and yet it is almost impossible to acquit him of the imputation. If all the virtue which he contemplates were accomplished, it would be that of an idiot, not the virtue of a man. This consists not in ignorance nor imbecility, but in resistance; and its worth is estimated in proportion to the magnitude of the resistance which is requisite, and the magnitude of the sacrifice

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fice which is made to the virtuous summons. Virtue is of an active and social character, and not to be found in the cell of the lazy monk, or in the apathy of the stupid savage; she delights in the haunts of awakened, civilised, and cultivated man; she shines in difficulties, dangers, and conflicts. It is this alone, which ennobles human nature, which conducts it to its proper dignity.

It has appeared, that the vices, to which man is prone, are known, in whatever constitutes the essence of their character, to the savage as well as to the sage; but it is allowed, that some forms of vice cannot be known to him, who has not known the very means of practising the vice in these forms; yet the vicious disposition may equally exist, and be proved to exist. The Hottentot or Siberian, to whom a fermented liquor has never been introduced, is ignorant of drunkenness; but what his conduct would be is evinced by that gluttonous excess, to which he abandons himself in his feast on a bear or a whale. It is the presence, not the

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absence of the means, which demonstrates the existence, and illustrates the character of virtue. This is strikingly exhibited in the history of the different ranks of polished society, and in the comparison of the savage nations with the lettered and polished nations of Europe. In civilised states the rudeness of the lower ranks is to them no protection against intemperance: whenever a full table or intoxicating liquors are within their reach, their abandonment to both exceeds every thing which can be charged upon the higher classes. The knowledge and cultivation to which these higher ranks have been introduced inspire higher views, give to their minds a firmer tone, and suggest stronger motives to self-command. Drunkenness is far, very far from being the general reproach of civilised Europe; but the Indians of North America are to a man surrendered to excess, and excess without limit, whenever the means are put into their possession. When Peter I of Russia undertook the difficult task of civilising his rude country,

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country, and introducing letters, science, and taste, where the very names had hardly been known, his court itself was not a stranger to drunkenness, and at any court entertainment it was necessary by a public edict to restrain the ladies of the first rank from indulging in more than a limited number of glasses of brandy. To prohibit the indulgence altogether was probably thought to be impracticable. The progress of lettered cultivation has effected that, which required the hand of power but imperfectly to effect before. The same proneness to every vice within their reach might be shown to be the character of every rude and unlettered nation, in which mind has not been awakened, nor raised to higher views, and more refined pleasures, than those of the mere animal. It is enough however to convict them of a propensity to gluttony and drunkenness. These are certain tests of a mind ignorant of all self-command, and of every incentive to self-command. Vice will be found in man, in whatever state of so-

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ciety he be placed; but it is the comparative quantity of vice which is the question. When a taste for learning, science, and the finer arts has taken possession of the man, he is not at leisure to be equally vicious with his ruder fellow, and he looks upon him with too much contempt to find any great inducement to tread in his debased walk. But I must check myself; I am passing into a repetition of what has already been noticed in the preceding part of my vindication of learning, science, and the arts, against the charge of luxury. I will close this part of my reply with a few plain questions, which I think will come home to the feeling of every one, and which perhaps may argue as much insight into human nature, and as much attention to the history of man, as any of the dicta of Rousseau.

Granting then to Rousseau, that learning may lead to the knowledge of new crimes, is it credible, that she does not lead to the knowledge of new virtues? If learning bring us acquainted with new evils, has she no new

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new blessings in her train? Does she provide no correctives, no remedy of the evils, which against her will intrude themselves into her company? Has the balance of these virtues, these correctives, and these remedies, been candidly, or even honestly, estimated? Is it of no consideration, is it no compensation for whatever of crime or evil may be alleged as the necessary concomitant, that erudition, a literary taste, science, and the elegant arts have exhibited men in various ages as Gods amidst the fellows of their race, and presented the most glorious of all spectacles, that height of dignity and worth, to which the cultivation of mind can raise human nature? Who that has a human soul, a spark of that sympathetic flame which the record of literary history enkindles, would wish that Pythagoras, Thales, Solon, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, or Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Menander, or Herodotus, Thucydides among the Greeks; that Cicero, Seneca, the Plinies, or Terence, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, or Livy, Sallust,

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Tacitus, Suetonius among the Romans; that Ariosto, Tasso, Corneille, Montesquieu among the Italians and French; or lastly, that in our own nation Bacon, Boyle, Newton, Shakspeare, Massinger, Otway, Addison, Pope, had not existed, in order to perpetuate the inanity of the torpid savage, innocent, if Rousseau please, of crime, but innocent of virtue also?

One charge yet remains, on which Rousseau expatiates with all the warmth of his glowing imagination. "The injury," says he, "which licentious philosophers have done to the cause of truth and virtue is of itself sufficient to damn the use of letters for ever. The impious writings of Leucippus and Diagoras perished with them; the art of immortalising the dangerous reveries of human understanding was then unknown. But, thanks to the art of printing, the dangerous reveries of Hobbes and Spinosa will remain for ever."—No! be not alarmed, my virtuous philosopher, Hobbes and Spinosa have almost passed to the same quiet oblivion

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vion with Leucippus and Diagoras; and though printing may have given to them that immortality, which preserves their names from absolute annihilation, yet few now inquire on what dusty shelf their reveries are peacefully reposing. It is true, there will be in every age of literature, and more perhaps in its more vigorous periods, a waste of genius, which it is not pleasant to look upon. There are who will write more to make a display of their wit and ingenuity, than of honest truth, and useful truth; and it would be to the honour of Rousseau, if candour could say, that he is clear of this imputation. It is true also, that every excellence of man will have its counterfeit, but detection is sure to ensue; the counterfeit incurs disgrace, and disgrace proportioned to the dignity of the character which it has impudently assumed. Is piety banished the Earth, because a low and groveling superstition has often assumed her name? Fanaticism has laid claim to inspiration; but the very fools, who for a while believed her, have been dis-

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abused, and hardly any one is now found so weak as to lend an ear to such stupid impostures. Persecution has claimed the merit of zeal; but her very outrages have worked the cure, and an enlightened world seems disposed to leave religion where it ever ought to have been left,—to every man's conscience, and to his God. The same may be observed of every science to which the intellect of man has been directed. Astrology has pretended to the honourable name of astronomy; alchymy and the cabala to that of chemistry; chicanery to that of jurisprudence; quackery to that of medicine; and sophistry, scepticism, and atheism to the truly dignified character of philosophy. But how fugitive in general has been the triumph of these counterfeits! or if not fugitive, yet truth finally gains the ascendancy, and in every field of science puts to flight the dreams of fools, and the impostures of knaves. Paracelsus and Van Helmont live only in the record of ignorance and impudence! instead of the closets of princes, astrologers

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astrologers are found only in garrets, and uttering their fooleries in the annals of Moore and Poor Robin; nor are any but the very dregs of the people now the prey of empirics and quacks. Whether plain sense and simplicity will ever triumph over the interested jargon and perplexity of law is a question, which I am not competent to decide; but I think it must appear to every one, that its professors are assuming a more rational and natural character, and that mystery and a pomp of technical words are losing credit at the bar. Des Cartes was a great genius; but his system of the world, his vortices and his atoms and his plenum are forgotten, while his geometry alone is still spoken of with honour. Voltaire aspired to the reputation of a philosopher: his philosophy is passing rapidly into oblivion, while posterity may respect him as a poet and historian. Perhaps in this I have allowed to him more than posterity will ratify. His histories, either positively or negatively, are a continued violation of truth; and nothing can make a pretension

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tension to history, which in any considerable degree is subject to this censure. Lord Bolingbroke in his day, not only as a statesman, but as an author, made a very conspicuous figure: his Letter to Sir William Wyndham, his Idea of a Patriot King, and his Letters on the Study and Use of History, together with the dignity of his style, will probably perpetuate his name, and be esteemed so long as English literature exists; but his atheistic philosophy, which he considered perhaps as his proudest work, has at this day hardly a being in the literary world. The same fate has attended the sceptical productions of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Chubb, Tindal, Collins, Hume, and even Rousseau himself. It would be degrading to these names to add that of Thomas Payne. He suited his day and his party. As an author on any subject he is dead. The alarm into which some friends of Christianity were thrown by the invective, which he issued from the prisons of Paris, was almost as contemptible as the work itself.

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This brief review of the history of scepticism, atheism, and of all false philosophy, which might be much enlarged, is sufficient to convince every one how little is to be apprehended from genius, wit, and humour, even of the highest form, if not directed to truth and useful truth; that truth, whatever be the subject, which will stand the test of the severest examination. In the estimate of talents, her enemies might be thought to be formidable, but there is something in the character of truth, which fits even common men to be her successful advocates, and in this contest giants have been foiled by pygmies. But neither the battle nor the victory had been known, if literature, that provocative of mind, had not furnished the champions of truth with those arms, with which they have triumphed over her proudest enemies. And shall literature, to which we owe this honourable triumph, be damned for ever, because Rousseau has pronounced the rash anathema? Rousseau was not honest, he wrote for fame. Rousseau

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seau himself has not been exempted from the charge which he brings against literature; the very essay in question convicts him of a waste of genius. But it is a more serious charge, that he was neither a moral man, nor a moral writer. As a man, he has committed himself to the severest judgement in his posthumous history of himself, and in his Confessions; while his Nouvelle Heloise breathes more licentiousness, and is more dangerous to a chaste morality, inasmuch as it is more accessible to the passions of youth, than all the abstract speculations of a false philosophy.

In what a contradictory view does man often appear, when he commits himself to the illusive flatteries of genius, uncontrolled by a sober principle of truth and right! In the beginning of the essay in question he has pronounced the eulogy of literature in these terms: "It is a noble sight," says he, "to see man rise as it were from nothing by his own efforts; to see him dissipate by the light of his reason the gloom, with which nature

nature has surrounded him; mount above himself; dart by the force of his mind into the regions of Heaven, and like the sun run over with giant step the vast extent of the universe; and lastly, to see him, which is the most difficult of all, reenter into himself, study his own nature, and make himself acquainted with the purposes, which he ought to answer, and the duties which he ought to perform." This spirited picture of man is just, and Rousseau appears to have contemplated it in all its glorious truth. With this impression, what could lead him to blacken the whole picture, and suppose that it is in man, as if by a perversity of the same nature, to defeat all the delightful and useful purposes for which his beneficent author had bestowed the wonderful faculty of reason on him?

I could not perhaps have better closed my present address to you, than with this conviction of Rousseau from the mouth of Rousseau himself. I may be thought also, to have another advantage in this contest, not

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not suited to a generous spirit, in arraigning Rousseau before a tribunal, which from its very institution must be predisposed to condemn him. But where can he be arraigned, and hope to find a more favourable tribunal? His essay is a libel on human nature, and on every literary society, which the better genius of enlightened Europe has brought forward to be its glory and its blessing. To be otherwise than predisposed to condemn the defamer of learning, science, and the arts, would be to renounce the very character in which you are here convened, which has procured a well-earned celebrity to your name, and which, I trust, no act of yours ever will betray to oblivion or disgrace.

Esto perpetua, Societas Mancuniensis, Amica Musis, Amica Minervæ, sed magis Amica Vero, et Amica Virtuti!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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